

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2023

Report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources

Part A

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose of Report

To enable the Commission to review and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme. This includes reviewing the changes made by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and adding items to their work programme.

Actions Requested

1. To review the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme and make any amendments the Commission feel necessary.
2. To agree that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme be updated in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and any further decisions taken during this meeting.

Reasons

- 1&2 To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter/subject.
2. To ensure that the information contained within the Work Programme is up to date.

Policy Context

The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 commits the Council to continue to improve customer service and deliver outstanding services.

Background

A change in the scrutiny structure was approved at full Council on 26th April 2021. This permitted the establishment of a Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee met on 12th September 2023. The outcomes of the meeting can be found in the minutes of the meeting which are published on the Council's website. The committee was due to meeting again on 28th November 2023.

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, there was a discussion about Council Assets and Garages. At the Scrutiny Panel Workshop on 31st August 2023, a scrutiny panel on Council Assets and Garages had been suggested. The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee had reviewed a report on this topic at their meeting on 12th September 2023. The Scrutiny Commission decided to consider the Finance and

Performance Scrutiny Committee's discussion and resolutions on the topic, before making any further decisions on this proposed scrutiny panel. The following is an extract from the draft minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting;

“Summary, key points of discussion:

- the Garage Site Review had been drafted pre-pandemic (2019), work had stalled due to ongoing recruitment to the Housing Strategy Manager position. The role profile was undergoing review to increase focus on the housing development service, this was likely to be completed in three months. Garage sites linked into other Housing strategies.*
- the number of garages was likely to have remained largely unchanged and rental income was significant. The rental charges had increased but investment in the sites had been limited with some being demolished.*
- noted that the Council had a legal obligation to store ex-tenant possessions for a short period before disposing, but considered ineffective to use garage space, and the possessions could be given to charity.*
- since 2019 there had been no further development of the garage sites, but sources of funding were the HRA and Homes England grant. Due to the time taken to develop a strategy, it was important to consider S106 agreements as the funds could be utilised to provide a 'quick fix' to this issue.*
- the Committee had identified this as an important issue alongside Voids and that work should be expedited, but noted that work on sheltered accommodation had higher priority for the Service.*
- that some of the void garages could be developed quickly and that the investment potential of the sites be considered. Further commentary was requested from the Director of Housing and Wellbeing as to why two garage sites / parking areas were not in the Garage Site Review.*

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Director of Housing and Wellbeing provide an update to the Committee after the meeting regarding garage numbers, income, development and investment potential, naming of garage sites that could be progressed quickly what revenue could be generated to compare against keeping the sites as garages, potential for letting to tenants for their own storage and use of S106 funding.*
- 2. that the Committee considered the information provided.*

Reasons

- 1. the Committee wished to receive updated information to support its scrutiny of the matter.*
- 2. to note the Committee's consideration of the information.”*

Appendices: Appendix - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Background Papers: None

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