

OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP 11TH MARCH 2019

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Capleton)
The Vice Chair (Councillor Ranson)
Councillors Baines, Bradshaw, Gerrard and Paling

Councillors Taylor (Cabinet Lead Member for
Communities, Safety and Wellbeing) and Vardy
(Cabinet Lead Member for Planning, Inward
Investment and Tourism Strategy)

Chief Executive
Head of Planning and Regeneration
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Brookes

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 11th February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

61. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

62. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

63. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

64. BUDGET VIREMENTS FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION SERVICE

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered (item 06A on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy and the Head of Planning and Regeneration attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group was advised that there had been difficulties for several years trying to recruit officers to the team, especially for the senior roles. This was due to a known national shortage of professional planners and it was recognised that the Council competes in the labour market in accordance with its organisational and employment policies.
- (ii) Agency workers were being used selectively to fill long term vacancies as well as cover vacancies arising from internal movement between posts. The Group was informed that there were currently 8 vacant posts of which 4 were being covered by agency workers.

Councillor Paling was appointed as Chair part way through this item as Councillor Capleton was taken ill.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy and the Head of Planning and Regeneration on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

65. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered (item 06B on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy and the Head of Planning and Regeneration attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group was advised that the timeframe detailed in the report was achievable although the department had no control on variables such as further government regulation being issued or stakeholder input.
- (ii) Planned developments identified in the core strategy could be expected to deliver the infrastructure identified as they had been tested as part of the examination of that plan. Unplanned developments must be assessed to understand their impacts and those impacts then mitigated in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. Where required infrastructure is not proposed it is a matter for the Plans Committee to consider the evidence and the harm caused and whether permission should be approved or refused. The Plans Committee had approved a number of applications in the last few years where required affordable housing was not included as part of the planning permission as evidence, independently tested by the District Valuer, suggested that the proposals would not be viable if it was included.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy and the Head of Planning and Regeneration on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

66. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY 2019 - 2024

A report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services was considered (item 06C on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group was advised that the draft strategy had already been considered by the Policy Scrutiny Group and the officers had taken on board their comments. The Strategy was now shorter and more user friendly.
- (ii) The strategy covered children and young people from the ages of 0 – 19 which was the same age range used for the Children and Families Plan as well as other services and it was felt appropriate for the strategy.
- (iii) The safeguarding policies were refreshed on an annual basis and relevant staff within the Council had been trained to look out for any signs of concern and to report them to a safeguarding officer.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

67. OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet's responses to the Group's recommendations be noted.

Reason

The Group was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Group's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

68. WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Group to consider its work programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny and to provide an opportunity for members of the Group to raise suggestions on issues for scrutiny (in addition to pre-decision scrutiny) which fell within the Group's remit, for scheduling by Scrutiny Management Board (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Group's current work programme be noted and updated following this meeting, in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and at this meeting and any items of pre-decision scrutiny that require changing due to their reprogramming by the Cabinet.

Reason

To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 24th June 2019 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Group.