

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 October 2024 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.03pm.

**Present:** Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Barton, D Harrison, Luckhurst, Payne, Redford, Russell and C Wightman.

**Also Present:** Councillor Davison – Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Councillor King – Portfolio Holder for Place.

## 47. **Apologies and Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Collins.

## 48. **Declarations of Interest**

Item 9 – Local Growth initiatives Plan – West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ)

Councillor Milton declared an interest because West Midlands Combined Authority had previously been a client of his business.

Item 11 – Leamington Town Centre Transformation Proposals

Councillor Milton declared he had an interest on a lease on a building within the area covered by the proposals.

## 49. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 September 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 50. **Quarterly Budget Update**

The Chair informed the Committee that following publication of the agenda, this item would not be considered until December 2024, in line with the work programme.

## 51. **Work Programme, Forward Plan & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Governance which informed Members of the Committee's work programme for 2024-2025, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and sought confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

The five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.

Two of the five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.

The pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions fell within the role of 'holding to account'. To feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions, the Committee needed to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which it would like to have impacted upon.

The Council's Forward Plan was published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting and set out the key decisions that were expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next twelve months.

A key decision meant a decision made in the exercise of an executive function by any person (including officers) or body which met one or more of the following conditions:

- (1) The decision was likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings in excess of £150,000. Excluded from this were all loans to banks or other financial institutions made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Officers' delegated powers to make the Cabinet decisions were subject to the key decision/call-in regime where it was likely that the Council would incur expenditure or make savings above the threshold of £150,000.

In relation to letting contracts, the key decision was the proposal to let a contract for a particular type of work. The subsequent decision to award the contract to a specific contractor would not have been a key decision provided the value of the contract did not vary above the estimated amount by more than 10% for contracts with a value of up to £500,000 or 5% for contracts of over £500,000.

- (2) The decision was likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities that lived or worked in any two or more wards. In considering whether a decision was likely to be significant, a decision-maker would have needed to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome would have had an impact, for better or worse on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the Council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

The Forward Plan was considered at each meeting and allowed the Committee to look at future items and become involved in those Cabinet decisions to be taken if members so wished.

The Forward Plan also identified non-key decisions to be taken by Cabinet in the twelve months that followed, and the Committee, if they wished, could also pre-scrutinise those decisions.

There were also policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could have pre-scrutinised and had an impact upon how these are formulated.

The Committee was mindful that any work it wished to undertake would have needed to have been undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan.

At each meeting, the Committee considered its work programme and made amendments where necessary, and commented on specific Cabinet items, where notice had been given by 9am on the morning after Group meetings. The Committee received a report detailing the response from the Cabinet, on the comments the Committee made on the Cabinet agenda in the previous cycle.

The Committee considered issues that had due significance with reference to the following criteria:

- the number of residents impacted and the significance of that impact;
- the amount of spend involved; and
- if it concerned a strategic priority of the Council or key project.

On the day of publication of the Cabinet agenda, all Councillors were sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 9.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Cabinet items they would like the Committee to consider.

The Chair informed Members that Councillor Day had stepped down from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He had also stepped down from the Budget Review Group as he had been appointed as a representative from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Therefore, there was a vacancy on the Budget Review Group. There were no volunteers to cover this at Budget Review Group on 16 October 2024.

Councillor Milton explained that he had met with both the Housing Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Standards Committee Chairs on 14 October 2024. Councillor Milton had requested they would review the membership of the Budget Review Group to ensure they have a member of the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the group as it also looked at the HRA.

At the same meeting, they discussed the fees and charges strategy and had requested the Head of Finance would produce an informal discussion paper for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This would be added to the work programme.

**Resolved** that

- (1) a briefing on the fees and charges strategy; and
- (2) a review of the ID Verde contract be added to work programme as part of the Committee's review of significant contracts.

**52. Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 17 October 2024**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet on Thursday 17 October 2024.

Item 9 – Local Growth Initiatives Plan – West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ)

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the report and reminded Cabinet of the indicative nature of the list of projects. Members welcomed and supported Abbey Fields being the first scheme being funded and recognised the potential benefits this could bring. The Committee also explored some of the wider risks presented by the political change and was satisfied that everything was done to mitigate those risks as much as it possibly could.

#### Item 11 – Leamington Town Centre Transformation Proposals

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee explored the need for a single, coherent approach to prioritisation and to the wider town centre and welcomed the appointment of a programme director in the future. The Committee recognised that the approach to transport needed to be holistic and Cabinet needed to think quite widely about the needs of different groups of people, including those travelling from rural areas and didn't have access to regular and reliable public transport. In addition, when potentially moving location of bus stops, the Committee emphasised that those most vulnerable would still be able to easily access essential facilities.

Members were concerned that there was a risk around managing the project going forward, and it was important to recognise what the priorities were, to make sure the desired outcomes were achieved. Members emphasised the importance of engaging local partners such as Warwickshire County Council early on and ensure they are on board with the project.

#### 53. **Public and Press**

**Resolved** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below:

Minute Number	Paragraph Number	Reason
53	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

#### 54. **Cabinet Agenda (Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 17 October 2024.**

The Committee considered the following confidential item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 15 – Kenilworth Wardens Sports Club Property Matter

These were detailed in the confidential minutes of the meeting.

(The meeting ended at 8.13pm)

CHAIR  
13 November 2024