

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.10pm.

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

73. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Day and Sullivan.
- (b) There were no substitutions.

74. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

75. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

76. **Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from the Cabinet and Council**

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2024 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report as well as the responses Cabinet had made to reports the Committee had scrutinised at its meeting on 6 December 2023 and the Budget Review Group had scrutinised at its meeting 1 November 2023 (Appendix 2 to the report). Appendix 3 to the report was a list of the 10 most valuable contracts managed by the Council.

The format of the Work Programme had been changed following discussions held at the Committee's meeting in January. The changes had been developed in order for the Committee to focus on the four agreed core themes, namely Risk, Climate Emergency Action Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Strategy.

The Chair explained that some items on the Work Programme had been changed so that they were now briefing papers to all District Councillors rather than reports to just the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The appendix setting out the 10 most financially valuable contracts managed by the Council had been brought forward at the request of the Committee. This was to enable it to consider these and if it wanted to look at the performance of any of these in more detail.

Looking forward to the business on the Work Programme for the 5 March 2024 meeting, the Significant Business Risk Register (SBRR) was scheduled to be considered by Cabinet. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that during 2024, the Council intended to review its approach to

risk management, risk policy and how this was linked to projects. This was following feedback from the recent Peer Review. He would provide a progress report at the next meeting if it was required. The Chair explained that the Committee would examine themes when reviewing the SBRR following its revision rather than looking at specific risks. This would be guided by the revised risk policy.

The Digital Strategy would now be included as part of the Change Programme scheduled for Cabinet in March. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that back in February 2023, the Council had made a commitment to undertake a Change Programme, a key element of which was digital transformation. The Digital Strategy would be combined into the report for the Change Programme, spelling out the business case and the case for change.

The Future High Street Funds update was also scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in March 2024.

The annual update from the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP) was also scheduled to be considered by the Committee in March. The Principal Committee Services Officer was asked to approach the Head of Service and request that a member of the Police should be invited to attend the meeting if possible. Members had raised questions about the 101 service when the Police had attended the previous year and wanted an update about how the 101 service was being co-ordinated to record all the telephone calls in the statistics. Councillor Falp would also be invited as she was the Council's non-Cabinet representative on the SWCSP as well as the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, Councillor Sinnott. The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that the Committee would also wish to examine the SWCSP's Action Plan.

The Committee noted the contents of Appendix 2 to the report.

Appendix 3 to the report listed the top 10 contracts by value managed by the Council. A top 10 projects list was expected in April. Members requested that the following contracts should be scrutinised:

- Leisure Services Provider 2017;
- Gas Servicing;
- General Housing Repairs;
- Joint Waste Collection Service for SDC and WDC;
- Grounds Maintenance Services;
- General housing repairs and voids; and
- Street Cleansing Services.

The Design and Build of Castle Farm & Abbey Fields would be examined when the Committee looked at projects.

The Principal Committee Services Officer was asked to request that Finance should send a note to the Members explaining why the contract figure for the Managed Card Payment Service was so high and the rationale behind this.

The Chair considered that the General Housing Repairs and Voids should be prioritised because the contract only had two years left to run and would be considered at the 30 July 2024 meeting.

Members asked for the following information to be provided in a report to the Committee:

- a survey of how well the repairs were undertaken, the time taken to undertake the repairs once a request was made, the effectiveness of the repair and quality of the work – performance;
- how were repairs prioritised and the process;
- what number (percentage) of repairs had to be repeated and timescales. What number (percentage) were not carried out to a satisfactory standard;
- what was not working and what was working;
- where things were going wrong, what proportion was that of the overall numbers;
- understanding why some parts of the service were performing well against other parts of the service that might be struggling to hit expectations;
- “Housemark” – allowing the Council to compare with other services and providers – where did the Council sit in comparison; and
- performance measured over the last 12 months and the measures used in terms of quality, satisfaction and costs.

The Committee would review performance and value for money which would also involve comparison to other providers.

At the Committee’s 26 March meeting, the Committee would determine what it would wish to see covered in a report to it on the Leisure Services contract. The report would be considered at the Committee’s 13 November 2024 meeting.

(The meeting ended at 6.45pm)

CHAIR
26 March 2024