

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held in the Council Chamber, The Symington Building,

Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough

29th November 2018

commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Dann, Chairman

Councillors: Bilbie, Mrs Burrell, Champion, Chapman, Hall (from 6.42 p.m.),

Johnson, Nunn, Mrs Page & Rook

Officers: B. Jolly, V. Wenham & G. Keeping.

APOLOGIES

None.

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMISSION

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held on 6th September 2018 be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

REPORT 1: PERFORMANCE END OF QUARTER 2 2018/19

The purpose of the report was to inform the Commission about the performance of the Council against the Corporate Delivery Plan at the end of the second quarter of the 2018/19 year.

The Chairman invited questions and comments from those present and the following was recorded:

Question/ Comment	Response
<u>KA.02.03 Develop Partnerships with Schools:</u> why is this recorded as being 'green' in paragraph 4.1.2 Table 1, when it is not completed?	As well as meaning completed, a 'green' status also indicates that the action or project is on track. In relation to KA.02.03, further detail is given in Appendix A.
<u>KA.01.01 Adoption and Implementation of the Local Plan:</u> the report on modifications to the Local Plan will now go to Council on 18 December 2018, and not 26 November as stated in the report.	Yes, but Report 1 sets out the situation at the end of September 2018 and the information was correct at that time.
<u>KA.01.02 Community Safety Partnership:</u> a) the use of radio adverts etc. is noted, but the emphasis seems to be on the Market Harborough area. What steps are being taken to ensure a fair geographical spread? b) Can Councillors be copied back into Parish	a) The issue of geographical spread is being considered as part of the Communications Strategy that is being developed at the moment. However, it is acknowledged that there is no single channel that covers the whole of the District and a variety of channels

<p>information, so that they can distribute it more widely - especially to those Parishes that meet only infrequently?</p> <p>c) Was the Council's printed newsletter used to carry this information too? Will the printing and distribution of a paper newsletter continue in future? Could bin-stickers be used to measure the take up of the printed newsletter and also to promote the electronic version?</p>	<p>need to be used - this provides a challenge.</p> <p>b) It was AGREED that steps would be taken to copy Members into communications to Parishes.</p> <p>c) the printed version of the newsletter is a one-off – the aim is to encourage people to go online to view the electronic version of the newsletter in future. If the Council decides that it wishes to use bin stickers, or to produce another printed edition of the newsletter, then additional budget provision will be required.</p>
<p><u>KA.03.03 Effective Housing Advice & Prevention of Homelessness:</u></p> <p>a) it was welcomed that this project was 'green'. It is understood that the Council is heading towards spending around £90K on B&B payments for homeless people. Is this a reasonable amount to be spending?</p> <p>b) does the Council still have its own flat for use by homeless people?</p>	<p>a) Work to try to prevent homelessness is ongoing, as well as looking for more cost-effective mechanisms to provide accommodation. The figure of £90K is in the correct region. Demand is increasing and this area is being put forward as a growth item in the Council's budget for 2019/20, so that the service (which is a statutory duty) is adequately resourced.</p> <p>b) Yes, the Council still has one flat, but other mechanisms for providing accommodation are also needed.</p>

The Scrutiny Commission:

NOTED the status of progress on performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2018/19 year and

RESOLVED that it was not necessary to invite any members of The Executive to attend a future meeting of a Scrutiny Panel to discuss the content of the report.

REPORT 2: FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission received a report setting out options for improvements to the frequency of meetings and the managing of the business of the Scrutiny Commission. Section 4 of the report detailed three options:

- Option 1 – that the Commission move to two scheduled meetings each year. Standing agenda items for these meetings would be:
 - to consider Performance Reports at the half-year and end-of-year position;
 - to approve the Scrutiny Work-plan.

Any amendments to items included on the current Scrutiny Work-plan to be agreed by the Chairman of Scrutiny, in discussion by email with the Chairs of the two Scrutiny Panels. Proposals for the addition to or deletion of items from the current Scrutiny Work-plan to be agreed by the Chairman of Scrutiny, in discussion by email with members of the Scrutiny Commission, and ratified at the next regular meeting of the Commission.

- Option 2 – that the Commission move to two meetings per year. The Scrutiny Work-plan to be removed as a standing item from the agenda and be dealt with completely outside regular meetings. It would be possible to delegate the formal approval of the work plan to an officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission. The existing arrangements for consulting with the Chairmen of the Panels would continue, with any comments being made to the Scrutiny Commissioner before any consultation with the officer before exercising his or her delegated authority.

- Option 3 - no change to current arrangements.

It was noted that the Scrutiny procedure Rules, which form Part 4(5) of the Council's Constitution, state that the Scrutiny Commission may meet up to four times a year and that changes to the working arrangements of the Commission that remain within the scope of the existing Scrutiny Procedure Rules may be made by resolution of the Commission itself.

RESOLVED:

- that the Commission move to two scheduled meetings each year, with a further two meetings held as reserve dates in the Council's rota, to be used if the Chairman of Scrutiny deems it necessary; and
- that standing items on the two regular meetings of the Commission be the consideration of Performance reports at the half-year and end-of-year positions and the approval of the Scrutiny Workplan. The mechanism for agreeing the Workplan to be as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

REPORT 3: THE SCRUTINY WORK-PLAN

During discussion of the draft Workplan, the following questions and comments were recorded:

Question/ Comment	Response
<u>Revenue & Capital Budgets (Performance January 2019)</u> : would this item be considered by the Performance Panel itself, or a wider meeting called?	It was AGREED that, as in previous years, a wider meeting of all non-Executive Members of the Council would be called, with Executive Members also invited to attend.
<u>Property Strategy (Performance March 2019)</u> : the Government has recently removed the cap from Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) and suggested that Councils might build council houses. Will this be considered in the Property Strategy?	It was AGREED that this could be included as an option for consideration within the Strategy – both in respect of building, and possibly renting, housing.
<u>Switch and Save</u> : is information on progress available?	It was AGREED that an update would be circulated to members of the Commission before March 2019.

The Scrutiny Commission RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Work-plan, attached as Appendix A to these Minutes, be approved.

MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

There were none.

The Meeting ended at 7:17 p.m.