

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 13 November 2023

Councillor Catherine Pope (Chair)

Councillor Roy Allan	Councillor Paul Feeney
Councillor David Brocklebank	Councillor Ron McCrossen
Councillor Lorraine Brown	Councillor Julie Najuk
Councillor Andrew Dunkin	Councillor Grahame Pope
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Roxanne Ellis	Councillor Sam Smith

Officers in Attendance: M Hill, R Hutchinson and E McGinlay

Guests in Attendance: Councillor Payne

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Welsh and Whiting, Councillors Feeney and Najuk attended as substitute.

19 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None.

21 PARTNERSHIP REVIEW - EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY - HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The Chair welcomed Rebecca Hutchinson, Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Manager, to the committee as part of the Council's partnership review programme.

Rebecca gave an overview of the key areas of the work in Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, highlights of which were as follows:

Gedling Borough Council (GBC) forms part of the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum which was created to establish and maintain effective

multi-agency arrangements to respond to major incidents and emergencies, minimise the impact of those incidents on the public, property, environment of Nottingham/Nottinghamshire and to satisfy the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

It was noted that various emergency plans are in place within GBC to come into effect should circumstances require them. These plans cover extreme Cold Weather, Hot Weather, Floods as well as the GBC Emergency Plan.

A Business Continuity Plan had been put in place to ensure the ongoing flow of business operations. This enables the council to function should there be a loss of premises, key staff, key suppliers and/or resources, utilities or fuel.

GBC have held two workshops in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), which helped define a draft Business Continuity Management Strategy. Team level plans were drafted with the aim to embed the business continuity management process by testing, maintaining and reviewing the strategy going forward.

The Council offers Business Continuity advice for small businesses, information on this can be found on the GBC website, highlighting other sources of advice.

The Chair gave Members the opportunity to ask questions.

Members queried how plans are reviewed and monitored following the use of an emergency plan.

Rebecca confirmed that an incident management team would monitor the effectiveness of the emergency plans, seeking to make improvements where possible. It was noted that a Strategic Resilience Group meets on a quarterly basis to review the lessons learned following an emergency.

RESOLVED:

The Chair thanked Rebecca Hutchinson for the information provided.

22 PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER ATTENDANCE.

Members welcomed Councillor Michael Payne, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance to the meeting to examine his portfolio. Councillor Payne gave an update to members on some key happenings within his portfolio.

No questions were received from Members in advance of the meeting, so Councillor Payne delivered an update on the various areas of responsibility within his portfolio. He gave the following updates:

Tina Adams had been appointed at the new Head of Finance and I.T and was also fulfilling the responsibilities of a Section 151 Officer for the time being. Posts in the finance department such as the Principal Business Partner had also been filled along with some agency cover for other roles, as required.

The accounts for 2021/22 were still awaiting audit assessment on the impact of the fraud case so sign off could not be completed. This was expected to be resolved in January 2024. The final accounts for 2022/23 were also ready but cannot establish an opening position on the accounts at the beginning of 2022 until the 2021/22 year is signed off.

The budget processes were ongoing and decisions on efficiencies were expected to take place with the Senior Leadership Team and the Cabinet before offering opposition parties the opportunity to put forward an alternate budget and scrutinise the budget process in February.

A procurement exercise for the internal audit was expected to commence in April 2024 which is a shared service with Bolsover Council. The Procurement Act received royal ascent and work had been ongoing to update the procurement strategy and contract procedure rules in line with legislation which comes into effect in October 2024.

A group of officers have come together, dubbed “The Transformers” to work closely with Change Network, consultants who have been contracted to help make a new IT/digital strategy for the Council.

A new Customer Services Strategy had been approved which includes a web chat feature on the Council’s website, offering residents additional avenues to communicate with the council.

The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask questions.

Members queried the performance indicators, asking how the targets were set and whether they were benchmarked against other Councils of similar sizes.

Councillor Payne confirmed that some targets were benchmarked against neighbouring authorities, and some were set internally depending on what the Portfolio Holders, in consultation with the Directors, agree is appropriate.

Members queried why the VAT refund by HMRC went into the general fund rather than being ring-fenced for a specific department such as Leisure.

Councillor Payne explained that due to pressures on the Revenue budget, it was not felt appropriate to ring-fence the refund for a specific department.

RESOLVED:

The Chair thanked Councillor Payne for the information provided.

23 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT SCORECARD QUARTER 1 23/24

The Chief Executive introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating members on the current level of assurance that can be provided against each corporate risk and to allow the committee to ask questions of the report.

Members queried whether the Council still offered work experience opportunities to young people and queried whether apprenticeships continue to be advertised.

The Chief Executive confirmed that work experience placements were still ongoing and noted that both work experience opportunities and apprenticeships form part of the council's workforce strategy.

Members queried the performance of staff following the roll out of remote working, allowing staff to work from home.

The Chief Executive confirmed that no negative results had been seen and assured members that service service area managers monitored workforce output through various channels to ensure that they continue to deliver against the expectations of their service area.

RESOLVED:

To note the information.

24 GEDLING PLAN - Q1 PERFORMANCE

The Chief Executive introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, informing members in summary of the position against improvement actions and performance indicators in the 2023-27 Gedling plan at the end of quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Members queried whether the council has had any consideration towards alternate provisions or initiatives to provide the public with better means of recycling packaging that is not accepted in their recycling bins under the current contractor.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a strategic waste group is in place to consider such options and welcomed suggestions from members and officers to make improvements for the public.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

25 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, providing an update on the scrutiny work programme.

The Democratic Services Manager informed members that the Strategic Local Plan update had been moved to the January meeting and the Welcome and Warm Spaces update had been moved to the meeting in March.

Members asked whether a list of external partners could be provided to allow members to consider which partners they would like to invite to the committee going forward.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

26 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 7.11 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: