

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 03 September 2015 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Williamson (in the Chair); Councillors M Coleman, Collins, Grant, Grey, Jeal, Jones, Lawn, Mavroudis, Myers, Sutton, T Wainwright and Walker.

Councillor Thirtle also attended.

Mrs J Beck (Director of Customer Services), Mr R Read (Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods), Mrs K Watts (Transformation Programme Manager) and Mr R Hodds (Cabinet Secretary).

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 July 2015 were confirmed.

4 UPDATE ON TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Transformation Programme Manager reported on the progress so far in relation to the Transformation Programme. The Transformation Programme Manager reported in detail in respect of the following:-

(a) Flexible Working

Members were advised of the progress in respect of Flexible Working and on the continued roll out of this across the Borough Council.

(b) Digital by Design

The Transformation Programme Manager reported on the savings anticipated in respect of the progress being made in connection with Digital by Design.

(c) Leisure Update

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods gave an update on the progress in respect of negotiations concerning the proposals in respect of the Phoenix Pool and the Marina Centre. Members were advised that the estimated completion date in respect of the proposed works for the Phoenix Pool would be the end of March 2016.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report in respect of the Transformation Programme be noted.

5 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Members considered the Chief Finance Officer's report on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which sets the direction and framework for preparing the Council's budget. The report provided a review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the report would be seeking Cabinet's approval for this to form the direction and framework for preparing the 2016/17 Revenue Budget.

The Transformation Programme Manager reported that the Medium Term Financial Strategy shows a balanced budget which will be kept under constant review, and that opportunities for further savings would also be considered as part of the Strategy.

In respect of a question in relation to shared services, Members were advised that any decision with regard to this would be a decision to be made by full Council. The impact on Council services had not at this stage been quantified should the Council pursue further negotiations in respect of shared services.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Customer Services reported on the possible savings to be made in respect of the GYBS Joint Venture Contract. With regard to service reviews, Digital by Design and reviewing local priority services, the Director of Customer Services reported that this did not propose the cutting of any services but that services would be delivered in a different way to deliver further savings of £200,000 in 2016/17, increasing by a further £200,000 in 2017/18.

The Committee also expressed their concern with regard to capacity issues in certain service areas and the issue of the posts of the Chief Executive Officer and Section 151 Officer were discussed. The Chairman commented that he expected swift action to resolve the situation in respect of these posts.

RESOLVED:

(i) The Chief Finance Officer's report in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

(ii) That Cabinet be recommended to move quickly to resolve the position in respect of the Chief Executive Officer and Section 151 Officer posts.

6 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16

The Cabinet Secretary updated Members on the proposed Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2015/16. The Committee agreed that the issue with regard to Market Gates Update would be considered at its next meeting on the 22 October. Members also agreed to include additional items relating to GYB Services – Customer Satisfaction, and Local Government Transparency Code 2014 Update.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items to consider.

8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act as the report contains commercial sensitive information.

9 NOTICE OF CALL IN - NORFOLK CAPACITORS DEBT WRITE OFF

The Chairman reported that he had decided to call-in the Single Cabinet Member decision made by the Cabinet Member for Resources in respect of the proposed debt write-off for Norfolk Capacitors, Beacon Park, Gorleston.

The Cabinet Member (Resources) reported on the background with regard to Norfolk Capacitors and on the reasons for the debt write-off to be approved. Details of the staged payment profile that had been agreed with the company were reported.

In discussing the proposed write-off, Members expressed their concern that the Council had not been able to make a charge against the land.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Scrutiny Committee agree to do nothing in respect of the debt write-off for Norfolk Capacitors, Beacon Park and that the Single Cabinet Member decision be

implemented.

(ii) That Cabinet be recommended to consider introducing a policy where partial payment could be secured against a charge against the land or asset in cases of future write-off issues.

The meeting ended at: 19:32