



**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Scrutiny Committee

## Minutes

Tuesday, 23 April 2024 at 18:30

### PRESENT:-

Councillor Williamson (in the Chair); Councillors Freeman, Grant, Galer, Hammond, Jeal, Murray-Smith, Robinson-Payne, Thompson, Wainwright & Waters-Bunn.

Councillor McMullen attended as a substitute for Councillor Cordiner-Achenbach.

Councillor Wells attended as an observer.

Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Ms K Sly (Executive Director - Resources), Mr J Wilson (Head of Environment & Sustainability), Mr J Wedon (Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Ms J Bowgen (HRA Finance Manager), Mrs N Hayes (Executive Director - Place), Mr D Zimmerling (IT Support) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer).

### 01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cordiner-Achenbach.

### 02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest given at the meeting.

### **03 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were confirmed.

### **04 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - UPDATE**

The Chair reported that the Head of Environment & Sustainability had provided a report at the last meeting which had been attached to the minutes for information and would give a verbal update at the meeting.

The Head of Environment & Sustainability reported that the results of structural survey had been completed and there was no imminent danger to the public. A confidential report would be presented to Cabinet on 16 May 2024 detailing potential enforcement action. Once the necessary notices had been served, he would be in a position to share the action plan and the timeline for compliance with the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Waters-Bunn asked if the freeholder or tenant was paying business rates on the property. The Head of Environment & Sustainability reported that he would need to check but advised that there were some exemptions.

Councillor Waters-Bunn reported that a householder had to pay council tax whatever the condition of their property and the Council should apply the same rules for business owners.

A member of the public requested to speak from the public gallery. The chair advised that he was not allowed to speak at the meeting. The member of the public refused to sit down and be quiet so the Chair closed the meeting at 18:38 and members were requested to leave the Council Chamber and gather in the Rambouillet Room.

The meeting reconvened at 19:01.

Councillor Wells reported that he endorsed the report which had been given to committee by the Head of Environment & Sustainability. Any councillor or ward councillor wishing to attend the next meeting of Cabinet to contact him and he would ensure that an invitation was extended.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the update report.

### **05 23-128 - QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer.

The Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer reported that the report presents an update on performance for the third quarter of 2023/24 (Oct – Dec) where progress is assessed against targets which are set at the start of the financial year. The report also provides an update on the position of key projects that are linked to

the corporate priorities from 'The Plan 2020-2025'. A summary of progress for the suite of key projects and individual highlight reports for each of these key projects are presented in Appendix 1 of this report. The performance measures, at Appendix 2 of the report, give a comprehensive overview of how the authority as a whole is performing and cover most Council functions.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 62 of the agenda pack, EN05 (b), and asked for clarification as to what the term "detritus" included and what the audit on the outer parishes meant. He felt that all of the Borough should be included in any audit and not just the outer parishes. The Head of Service reported that the outer parishes might not be receiving adequate street cleansing and it was necessary to ascertain what condition these areas are in. The Council was in the process of replacing its ageing sweeper fleet. The term outer parishes referred to any villages outside of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston & Bradwell.

Councillor Wainwright referred to item HN04, on page 63 of the agenda pack, the cumulative cost of void properties, and asked why there had been a huge increase on the cost of the previous year once again. The Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer reported that the cost increase was due to the cost of works on large, void properties, which are required to be brought up to FHS. Work is ongoing with tenants to ensure that they upkeep their properties to the standard which the Council expects and ELT had allotted resources to carry this workstream out.

Councillor Grant asked for an assurance that we would not allocate properties to tenants before major works were undertaken as he would rather that they were updated before they were rented. Councillor Grant asked if every tenant was visited once a year by the tenancy team and how many tenancy audits were carried out annually.

The Chair requested that a Housing Officer be invited to attend the next Scrutiny Committee meeting to give a report on Voids.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report and that a Housing Officer be invited to attend the next meeting to give a report on Voids.

## **06 24-023 - ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2024-25**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Information Lead and Data Protection Officer.

The Information Lead and Data Protection Officer reported that the report introduces the Council's Annual Action Plan for 2024-25. The Annual Action Plan 2024-25 documents the projects and activities that will be taken forward by the Council during 2024-25, this builds on the previous year's action plan and continues the delivery of 'The Plan 2020 - 2025'.

The Annual Action Plan also includes a suite of Performance Indicators that relate to 'The Plan 2020 - 2025' and on-going service delivery of the Council. This data will be presented to quarterly to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

The Information Lead and Data Protection Officer reported that there was a formatting error on item number 18, on page 23, of the agenda pack, as the text has been duplicated. He reported that he could send a corrected version to Members following the meeting, if required.

Councillor Waters-Bunn referred to item number 19 on page 23 of the agenda report and asked that as the Council intended to consolidate the various community hubs which were identified in the report, that the Committee be given an assurance that all GYBC staff concerned would retain their jobs.

The Information Lead and Data Protection Officer reported that as far as he was aware, there were no plans for job cuts for the GYBC staff involved.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

## **07 23-181 - 2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 9**

The Executive Director - Resources reported that this report presents the month 9 budget monitoring position for financial year 2023/24 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including the respective capital programmes and financing. It includes explanations for significant variances to the budgets currently forecast for the full year.

The Chair advised that, in future, this report should be presented to the Committee in June, rather than April, as this would give the in-year position.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the contents of the cabinet report which was approved by Cabinet on 4 March 2024.

## **08 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Chair reported that the purpose of this Annual Report was to inform Council and members of the public of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee during 2023/24. The Chair reminded Members that the Scrutiny Committee was an independent committee and effective scrutiny enhances accountability, ensures transparency of decision-making, contributes to service improvement, and acts as a 'check and balance' on decision-makers.

The Chair thanked the Monitoring Officer, Corporate Services Manager & Democratic Services Officer for all their hard work supporting the committee.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

## **09 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and considered the Work Programme.

Councillor Jeal requested that playgrounds and playground maintenance be added to the Work Programme. The Committee agreed that this item be added to the Work Programme 2024-25 which would be updated in May.

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Committee note the Work Programme.

The meeting ended at: TBC