

ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT & PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4th July, 2018
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Gary White – in the Chair
Councillors	Burgess, John Cooper, Driver, Gardner, Maxfield, Olszewski, Panter and J Williams
Officers	Head of Planning and Development - Guy Benson, Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) - Neale Clifton, Regeneration and Economic Development Manager - Kim Graham, Partnerships Manager - Sarah Moore and Head of Operations - Roger Taitt

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Vice Chair, Councillor Reddish, Councillor Harrison and Cabinet Members T Johnson and P Northcott.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted on this occasion.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Acting Chief Executive submitted Draft Terms of Reference for the newly constituted Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee explaining that they followed a standard format being recommended for adoption by all three newly created Scrutiny Committees. The Terms of Reference reflected the main aims and responsibilities of Scrutiny Committees under the Local Government Act 2000 and included reference to existing procedural rules in the Council's Constitution. The Terms were intended to provide an early basis for the Committee's work and could be reviewed in the light of experience.

The Chair stressed his wish for members to participate in determining the Committee's workload and highlighted the provision for relationship management meetings between himself and the Vice Chair with the three Cabinet Members' whose portfolios came under this Committee's remit.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference be approved.

4. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Acting Chief Executive reported on the need to draw up a Work Programme for the Committee for 2018/19 and sought to assist by setting out guidance on issues to consider when identifying areas for scrutiny. The Chair reported his intention to seek members' submissions for inclusion in the Programme. Items listed for this meeting had been at the Chair's request and he explained the absence of the report on Recycling as listed on the agenda which would now be submitted in September 2018.. Members added issues which they wished to see addressed in the report on Recycling.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Work Programme report and template be circulated to Committee members and submissions invited for consideration for inclusion in the Work Programme.
- (ii) That the report on Recycling be submitted to the 26 September 2018 meeting of the Committee and address the items raised by members.

5. GRASS CUTTING OPERATIONS

Members received and questioned a report by The Head of Operations on the causes of a backlog in grass cutting operations during Spring 2018, actions taken to address that backlog and the methods adopted in the management of the resources available for the peaks and troughs of demand for this service area. Responding to an enquiry from the Chair on any supporting actions which the Committee might offer, the reporting officer referred to the need to manage public expectations of the service given the budget restraints now in effect.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. TREE MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

The Head of Operations reported and was questioned on the systems adopted and resources available for the management and maintenance of some 70,000 trees in the Borough. He made particular reference to improvements which technology was providing for the longer term, the use of a flexible pool of support staff and the introduction of a scheme whereby residents could fund works directly if they so wished. He reported on the allocation of an additional £30,000 in the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and, responding to the Chairs enquiry on any support which the Committee could give to the service, suggested that the on-going commitment of that additional funding would be of considerably benefit.

RESOLVED—That the report be noted and representations be made to the Cabinet on the importance of continuing the allocation of the additional £30,000 funding on a year on year basis

7. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SERVICE - REVIEW OF WORKLOAD AND RESOURCING

The Committee received a report on the workload and staffing of both ‘arms’ of the Planning Service: Planning Policy and Development Management. The demand led nature of the service presented difficulties in workload planning and staffing in addition to which national pressures were increasingly influencing prioritisation. Staffing vacancies and the options available for securing personnel in a competitive marketplace were discussed. If the current vacancy rate could not be resolved support would be welcome from the Committee for any measures to enhance the Council’s offer.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

9. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent business.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

COUNCILLOR GARY WHITE
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.00 pm