

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 10 June 2015.

Present:-

Trevor Jones (Chairman)
Mike Byatt (Vice-Chairman)
Andrew Cattaway, David Harris and Peter Wharf.

Robin Cook (Cabinet Member for Corporate Development), Peter Finney (Cabinet Member for Environment) and Rebecca Knox (Cabinet Member for Communities Health and Wellbeing) attended under Standing Order 54(1).

Mervyn Jeffery, County Councillor for Shaftesbury attended for minutes 110 to 111.
Bill Trite, County Councillor for Swanage attended for minutes 115 to 116.

Officers:

Sam Fox-Adams (Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications), Mark Taylor (Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management) and Helen Whitby (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

Other officers attending as appropriate:-

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Patrick Ellis (Assistant Chief Executive), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Jonathan Mair (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Marc Eyre (Corporate Risk Officer), Dave Hill (Director of Planning, South West Audit Partnership), Stephen Howard (Strategy and Community Liaison Officer), Fiona King (Communications and Marketing Officer), Andrew Martin (Head of Highways), Patrick Myers (Head of Business Development), Sally Northeast (Corporate Communications Manager), Phil Rook (Group Finance Manager), Andy Smith (Group Finance Manager) and Suzanne Westhead (Interim Managing Director, Tricuro).

Public Participation – Minutes 178-180

John Porter, local resident (Statement)
Paul Champagne, local resident (Statement)
Robin East and Judith Morgan, local residents and members of the A350 Community Group (Joint Statement)

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on **21 July 2015**.)

Apologies for Absence

102. Apologies for absence were received from Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Ian Gardner and Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy).

Code of Conduct

103.1 There were no declarations by members of any discloseable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

103.2 Andrew Cattaway declared a general interest as a Cabinet Member for North Dorset District Council in relation to minutes 115 to 116.

Minutes

104. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2015 were confirmed and signed.

Progress on Matters raised at Previous Meetings

105.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which updated members of progress made following discussions at previous meetings.

105.2 In relation to recommendation 69 (Phoenix House, Lessons Learned) which had been considered by the Cabinet on 13 May 2015, it was confirmed that the business case model was used by the County Council and that training was provided for officers. It was also noted that there was a clear signing-off process for business cases at the appropriate level depending on risk and cost.

105.3 Reference was also made to the sign-off process for the Alternative Service Delivery Model Governance and Due Diligence Checklist to be considered later on the agenda and it was confirmed that sign-off would again be at the appropriate level, dependent upon the level of risk involved.

105.4 With regard to the Committee's recommendation for external validation of business cases, it was noted that this would occur in appropriate cases. The Chief Executive stated that appropriate challenge was already in place with Heads of Service having received training on the business case model. She also reported that toolkits were provided for other staff, with sign-off at a senior level in cases of high risk or high value projects.

Noted**Public Participation****Public Speaking**

106.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

106.2 There were three public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2). The statements are referenced at minute 110.3 and are attached to these minutes as an Annexure.

Petitions

107. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

Work Programme

108. The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of 2015.

Noted**Cabinet Forward Plan**

109. The Committee considered the Cabinet's draft Forward Plan for the meeting to be held on 8 July 2015.

Noted**Scrutiny Items****Audit and Scrutiny Briefing - Cabinet Decision on C13 Road**

110.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on a Cabinet Decision on the C13 road which was made on 13 May 2015. The Chairman had received a

letter following this meeting which questioned the decision and, having considered the matter, he had concluded that the decision did not warrant either a “Call In” or a “Call to Account”.

110.2 The Chairman stated that the Committee would not be challenging the decision taken by the Cabinet, nor could it override that decision. It would, however, focus on whether the basis on which the decision was made was well-founded and appropriate advice provided.

110.3 Public statements were received from Mr John Porter as a local resident, Mr Paul Champagne as a local resident of Melbury Abbas, and a joint statement from Paul Reynolds and Judith Morgan as local residents and members of the A350 Community Group. The statements are attached to these minutes as an Annexure. The Committee had also received an email from Mr Brian Hughes as the Chairman of Melbury Abbas and Cann Group Parish Council and a letter from Mr Paul Reynolds, a resident of Shaftesbury.

110.4 The Cabinet Member for Environment explained that the Cabinet decision to reopen the C13 to all traffic had been made following a site visit and consideration at the meeting on 13 May 2015 which included risk assessments of each of the scenarios put forward. Members had been concerned about the risk of a potential landslip for light vehicles but the proposed mitigation works would reduce this risk and address damage to the network. The Cabinet had received a number of requests to re-open the road in order to reduce damage to the local network and to support local businesses and were aware that HGVs were circumnavigating the road closure.

110.5 For clarification the Cabinet Member for Environment stated that the decision had not been made on political grounds and was satisfied that the risk assessment process provided a professional and realistic opinion of the scenarios considered. He also added that the site visit had informed the Cabinet regarding the damage to the network and at Dinah’s Hollow to give a properly informed decision.

110.6 With regard to the risk assessment process, the Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management stated that the Council’s risk management process had been scrutinised by their brokers, insurers and external consultants. It had been objective and provided a fair assessment of the options and he confirmed that this information could be provided, if required. The risk assessment process was considered to be robust as it followed best practice adopted by the majority of local authorities.

110.7 In response to questions, the Head of Highways confirmed that this was a temporary road closure and that no other traffic management measures were proposed. A longer term solution would be considered once engineering works commenced in October/November 2015 and local residents and parish councils were already being consulted about possible longer term solutions. Members highlighted the need for engagement with stakeholders and the communities affected.

110.8 Attention was drawn to the fact that HGV warning mechanisms in the area had not been maintained properly and this would need to be addressed as they would play an important part in any traffic management solution in the area. Officers agreed that there had been maintenance issues and would take this up with appropriate officers.

110.9 With regard to the danger to light vehicles, it was explained that single file traffic was in operation on the part of the route where there was greatest risk and traffic on this stretch was in constant motion.

110.10 The County Councillor for Shaftesbury had attended in order to learn about the situation so that he could respond to members of the public when they sought information

from him. He had not understood the reason for excluding light vehicles but in his experience as an HGV driver damage was more likely to be caused by HGVs than smaller vehicles.

110.11 It was explained that a decision needed to be made quickly and referring the matter to the Overview Committee would have delayed the decision being taken and the opening of the road. Some members were disappointed that this matter had not been considered by the Overview Committee prior to the Cabinet taking the decision and it was suggested that Overview Committees meet more frequently to avoid similar situations in future, or for additional meetings to be scheduled when such items occurred. Other members understood the need for a quick resolution and for the matter to go direct to the Cabinet.

110.12 As there had been reference to mitigation measures to be taken, but no detail provided, the Chairman requested that this information be made publicly available so that they could satisfy themselves that appropriate action had been taken. It was also requested that the Environment Overview Committee has an opportunity to scrutinise future traffic management proposals for the area, prior to Cabinet decision. The Head of Highways Operations confirmed that this was the intention and that details of mitigation measures would be on the Council's website in the next couple of days.

Resolved

111.1 That the Cabinet decision on the C13 road was based on a robust process.

111.2 That details of the mitigation works to be carried out be made available to the public.

111.3 That the Environment Overview has an opportunity to scrutinise future traffic management proposals for the area, prior to any Cabinet decision.

Forward Together Update

112.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which provided an update on progress on the property work stream and work streams under the Commercialisation and Income Generation Board. The report also provided the consolidated reporting matrix and progress against the primary work streams in Forward Together.

112.2 The Head of Business Development presented the report highlighting efforts to increase the number of staff accommodated in County Hall in order to reduce costs and accelerate the programme of asset disposal; how members would be more involved in managing service delivery in future and informed about the role that volunteers and communities could play; the staff seminar programme which would equip them with the knowledge and skills they needed to adapt to new ways of working; and the new reporting template which the Committee would regularly see as part of future updates.

112.3 Whilst welcoming the commissioning learning network as a positive development both for staff and members, members asked for the seminar programme to be posted on the Members Gateway.

112.4 Some concern was expressed about areas in County Hall and Princes House being vacant for some time. It was explained that the Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management's team had moved into the South Annexe along with other members of the Chief Executive's Department in an effort to build relationships across the new team and that space at Princes House was now occupied by Public Health and Children's Services. With regard to Directors and their Personal Assistants returning to their Directorate base, the Chief Executive explained that they had moved back to increase resilience there.

112.5 One member highlighted that officers were not responding to member emails and asked that a single point of contact be identified for them. The Head of Business Development stated that member engagement was key and that an action plan to address

issues highlighted at a recent workshop had been drawn up and would be shared with the Committee at a future meeting. A further workshop was planned. The Chairman added that not only did the action plan need to be implemented but members also had a duty to complete the monthly questionnaire.

112.6 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Development stated that in his view the pace of the Forward Together Programme needed to be faster but this was now increasing. With regard to member engagement, he had only experienced appropriate responses from officers, but he reminded members that they had a responsibility to respond to emails.

112.7 The difficulties some members had in trying to access the current IT system were highlighted. The Chief Executive undertook to follow these issues up outside of the meeting.

Noted

Tricuro - Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) - Update

113.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Adult and Community Services which updated them on progress with the implementation of the Pan Dorset LATC, highlighted risks associated with it and identified mitigation actions in place to manage additional risks which arose from the increased complexity. It also provided an update on the Implementation plan.

113.2 The Director for Adult and Community Services reminded members that the County Council had established Tricuro to meet people's care and support needs across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The report focused on the challenges and risks of establishing Tricuro in time for a go live date of 1 July 2015, whilst maintaining the current high quality of service provided. The process had been subject to external challenge and she was comfortable with the current level of risk. She believed that the Pan-Dorset partnership, health and social care and the community would work together to ensure the "go live" date was achieved. The Group Finance Manager added that Beach House was nearly complete, that interviews for the posts of Chairman and Financial Director had been arranged and that Tricuro had the support of both KPMG and the Care Quality Commission. The current business case was to be reviewed and these findings would be shared with the Committee.

113.3 The Interim Managing Director reported that she had been impressed with the work undertaken to establish Tricuro and was optimistic about the "go live" date of 1 July 2015. She would provide a lessons learned report for the Committee on how the first three months' of operation had gone.

113.4 With regard to how conflicting expectations from the three local authorities would be managed, the Director for Adult and Community Services explained that there had been significant progress with joint working in recent weeks and particularly with regard to the establishment of the Executive Shareholder Group (ESG) and the shareholder agreement. She recognised that there were still some areas for further work.

113.5 The County Councillor for Swanage, as Chairman of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee, confirmed that the establishment of the LATC had received cross party support from the Committee, who were content with progress to date and recognised the difficulties and risks faced by the Council in taking this course of action.

113.6 Members asked for assurance that the establishment of Tricuro was not being rushed and what scrutiny arrangements were in place, South West Audit Partnership's involvement and whether ICT systems would be in place by the "go live" date.

They noted that the ESG would have responsibility for managing the Tricuro contract and that its members would be provided with clarity about its role and responsibilities as these would change once “go live” had been achieved. In relation to ICT, it was explained that the Head of ICT and Customer Services was taking the lead on this aspect and he was confident that systems would be in place by “go live”. With regard to SWAP, they had agreed to a flexible approach to target issues when work was needed. The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management added that SWAP would remain flexible and provide independent challenge. However, in future, Tricuro could commission its own internal audit service but the Council would still need to be assured that the service was effective and fit for purpose.

113.7 Members asked how Tricuro would meet increased service demands and in particular would budgets be overspent. The Director for Adult and Community Services explained that Tricuro had a five year contract which would specify volumes, cost and outcomes linked to the financial analysis within the business case. This would provide efficiency savings for the Council but if demand for services increased then the Council would have to pay for any additional services needed or provided by Tricuro over and above that within the contract. It was hoped that the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group might commission services through Tricuro which would help with health and social care integration. She confirmed that efficiency savings based on prudent calculations were on track which was important as annual savings would support the Forward Together Programme. Tricuro was one part of the strategy to meet additional demands for services, the others being staff restructures, the transformational service approach and greater support being provided within the community. The Chief Executive added that the Council’s responsibility to meet unplanned needs remained the same and that Tricuro would not reduce the demand led budget. It did provide an opportunity for business growth and for a potential return on investment but would not provide an answer to pressure on Adult Social Care services.

113.8 Given the recent experience of the Dorset Waste Partnership, members were concerned that there be clarity about the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the various bodies concerned so that there was no confusion. The Director for Adult and Community Services agreed to provide members with the relevant terms of reference and the shareholder agreement for clarity.

Resolved

114.1 That a lessons learned report be provided by Tricuro after the first three months of operation.

114.2 That members be provided with relevant terms of reference and the shareholder agreement for clarity.

Independent Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee

115.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Chairman of the Working Group and the Chief Executive on the outcomes of a recent review of the effectiveness of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

115.2 The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management presented the report which summarised the findings of the recent review by PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) and the outcomes from a recent member workshop where these were considered. The workshop had provided consensus on some areas but the Committee would need to pay particular attention to those areas where consensus had not been achieved, and to potential wider implications of any recommendations they made.

115.3 The Chairman of the Working Group asked the Committee to consider the findings and agree those which were within its powers or make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet or the County Council if a change to the current committee structure was thought necessary.

Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 10 June 2015

115.4 Members then considered the recommendations individually, agreeing those where consensus was reached, and discussing other recommendations in detail. It was noted that if the Committee no longer had Overview responsibility for the Chief Executive's Department, then this would have implications for the Council's committee structure. The Chief Executive reported that a review of the Council's committee structure and decision-making function was to be undertaken and would be completed later in the year. Responsibility for the Chief Executive's Department could be considered during the review which would include engagement with members by way of workshops.

115.5 In relation to the "Audit" and "Scrutiny" functions, some members were in favour of these being split, whilst others supported the continuation of the current system as this provided clarity and added interest for members. Some reservations were expressed about the ability of the Overview Committees to undertake the scrutiny function and that they might need to meet more often to deal with scrutiny matters. The possibility of having a separate Scrutiny Committee was also suggested. It was agreed that a decision about the separation of "Audit" and "Scrutiny" should be considered as part of the review of the Council's committee structure and decision-making function.

115.6 There was some disagreement about maximum terms of office for members sitting upon the Committee and that this might not be achievable as it relied upon election results. Members supported the "comply or explain" approach.

115.7 Members supported having a role description as a means of identifying new members to sit on the Committee. They suggested that the time between the election results and appointments to Committee be lengthened to help this process and the Chief Executive agreed to look at this suggestion.

115.8 With regard to the production of an Annual Report, this was supported but the possibility of Overview Committees also producing annual reports was mentioned although it was recognised that there would be resource implications if this was to be introduced.

115.9 It was recognised that although the Committee did not have a dedicated budget, this did not mean that it could not commission work as it had done previously. Members were concerned that a dedicated budget might lead to work not being commissioned because of overspend although they noted that the budget currently included the work of internal audit, external audit and officer support time. The Chief Executive added that because there was no "visible" budget members did not have an opportunity to challenge this. It was suggested that this be reviewed.

115.9 In order to help the Committee with its deliberations about splitting the "Audit" and "Scrutiny" functions, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services agreed to provide draft terms of reference for the various options for the meeting on 21 July 2015.

Resolved

116.1 That the PwC report had potential for wide ranging implications for the Council and its current Committee structure was noted.

116.2 That a maximum of two terms of office be introduced for Committee members whilst acknowledging:-

- (a) political balance on the Committee should be achieved.
- (b) the Constitution required that the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman be taken by councillors from the second and third largest political groups.
- (c) the membership must involve those who genuinely wanted to participate and contribute to the work of the Committee.

(d) in establishing guidance for a maximum term of office, it was generally agreed that a “comply” or “explain” approach would be taken to deliver against this principle.

116.3 That the Committee review the skills and experience within its total membership and map these to the remit of the Committee. Skills gaps should be addressed through training and potentially by co-opting an independent member.

116.4 That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee’s forward plan should be revised to reflect the Council’s corporate objectives to ensure it is focused, prioritised, responsive and balanced and to remove any duplication of Committee reports, whilst recognising the different roles and responsibilities that the various Committees have in relation to items.

116.5 That the agenda setting process be improved to separate out items relating to scrutiny and those relating to audit.

116.6 That the roles and responsibilities, including the expected level of time input, of the Committee’s support officers be clearly defined to reduce duplication and to ensure sufficient support is provided to ensure necessary outcomes are achieved.

116.7 That officers and members work more closely in defining the requirements of Committee papers before these are produced.

116.8 That the Committee produce an Annual Report so that it can evaluate the effectiveness of the work it has done in the year, considers the implications for the following year, demonstrate the added value it achieves and records the reasons behind any deviations from best practice.

116.9 That a role description be drawn up for members of the Committee to be used when identifying new members and consideration be given to the formal appointment process following elections to enable an appropriate period for assessment and reflection.

116.10 That officers investigate the merits, or otherwise, of a dedicated budget for the Committee.

Recommended

117.1 That the Cabinet agreed that as part of a review of the Committee and decision making functions consideration be given to:-

(a) where the overview function of the Chief Executive’s Office should best sit;

(b) whether the “Audit” and “Scrutiny” functions continue as a combined Committee, or “Scrutiny” becomes part of the role of the Overview Committees;

(c) where the scrutiny of whole Council issues will be performed;

(d) following agreement to the above the “Call-in” and “Call to Account” powers be considered and clearly assigned.

117.2 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee’s terms of reference should be revised to clearly split out responsibilities for scrutiny and audit. The weighting given to Audit should be increased and they should reflect the Council’s corporate objectives.

117.3 That the report production process is too long; the time should be reduced between drafting and issue of reports by automating the sign-off process.

RECOMMENDED

118. That the County Council, following consideration by the Standards and Governance Committee, agree to disband the Ad Hoc Accounts Committee and transfer its current role to the Audit Committee.

(Note: Following subsequent consideration by the Standards and Governance Committee on 6 July 2015 and the Cabinet on 8 July 2015 this recommendation will not be considered by the Council until 12 November 2015.)

Reason for Recommendation

119. To contribute to the Council’s aim to ‘Provide innovative and value for money services’ through the active consideration and implementation of actions to improve the effectiveness of the Committee.

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 Final Outturn

120.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer on the final outturn for the Chief Executive's Department and the Cabinet.

120.2 The Committee noted that the final underspend for the Chief Executive's Department would be £248k and that the final position on service budgets for the whole authority was currently forecast to be an overspend of £4.496m, with £3m of this being offset.

120.3 With regard to the predicted overspend for ICT of £191k in January 2015 which had now reduced to an underspend of £12k, the Group Finance Manager explained that this had reduced as a result of costs being attributed to capital programmes and schemes. Steps were being taken to improve the current reporting system to avoid repetition. Members were also reminded that the Assistant Chief Executive had explained the ICT budget situation at the last meeting and steps being taken to reduce it to a zero position.

Noted**Lessons Learned from Call to Account on Universal Free School Meals**

121.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on lessons learned from the recent Call to Account on Universal Free School Meals.

121.2 The review of the most recent Call to Account had resulted in suggested improvements to be taken prior, during and after any future Calls to Account.

121.3 Members highlighted the need for any seating plan to enable members to see those addressing the Committee and that appropriate accommodation be sought, particularly if large numbers of attendees were expected.

Resolved

122. That the lessons learned as set out in the Chief Executive's report be noted and implemented for any future Calls to Account.

Alternative Service Delivery Models - Governance & Due Diligence Checklist

123.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on alternative service delivery models which the Council was playing an increasing part in and concerns about their governance and scrutiny arrangements. The report also included a draft assessment template for completion prior to any final decision to proceed with a new service delivery model, based on the Healthy Organisation Model adopted by the Council.

123.2 Following the Committee's continuing concerns about governance and scrutiny arrangements for the increasing number of different partnerships the Council was involved in and because these were likely to be further increased as a result of the Forward Together Programme, a governance and due diligence checklist had been developed in order to manage any associated risks. This was based on the Healthy Organisation Model and had been considered by the Council's brokers, insurers, the County Leadership Team and the Risk Management Group. The checklist could not only be applied to new partnerships but also in retrospect to existing ones with a view to identifying any areas for improvement.

123.3 Members were supportive of the themed approach but expressed some concern at the size of the checklist and suggested that it be shortened, with some suggesting that it be reduced to a single page as in its current format it would take time to complete. Reference was made to the clarification at minute 105.3 as to who would complete the form.

123.4 The possibility of using the checklist to provide assurance about the implementation of Tricuro was noted. It was suggested that the checklist be preceded by a cover sheet summarising areas met or unmet.

Resolved

124. That the approach suggested within the draft Governance and Due Diligence Checklist be supported.

Recommended

125. That the Cabinet agree in principle to the adoption of the Governance and Due Diligence Checklist subject to the amendments noted in the minute above.

Refreshed Corporate Branding Guidance

126.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on the recent review of the corporate brand and the revised corporate branding guidelines. The refreshed guidance had been considered by the Cabinet on 13 May 2015.

126.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Development's support for the refreshed corporate branding guidance was reported.

126.3 The report had been provided in response to the Committee's interest in the application of corporate branding over a number of years. The guidance was supported by Cabinet and Directors and steps were being taken to ensure that managers understood its requirements and for it to be implemented across the Council. A staff awareness campaign was also under way. Although there had been some minor amendments to the guidance, the principles remained unaltered.

126.4 Members recognised the importance and value of the "brand" and welcomed the refreshed guidance.

Noted

Audit Items

Local Code of Corporate Governance – Compliance Assessment 2014/15

127.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which presented the draft Annual Compliance Assessment for 2014/15. Whilst its completion was not a statutory requirement, it helped to inform the compilation of the Annual Governance Statement which was a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

127.2 The assessment centred on seven key principles and the report summarised the issues within the Compliance Assessment which would be considered later in the year as part of the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Accounts. All areas within the Assessment had either a "green" or "amber" rating.

Noted

Internal Audit Annual Report 2014/15

128.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which summarised the work of the Internal Audit Service for 2014/15 and provided an overall positive assurance opinion on the Council's framework of risk management, governance and internal control based upon the internal audit work undertaken during the year. It also provided a summary from the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) of audit assignments undertaken by them during 2014/15, including the respective assurance ratings, ranking of any recommendations made and details of partial opinions during the last quarter, and evidence in support of the

“review of effectiveness of internal audit” as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

128.2 The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management presented the Internal Audit Annual Report 2014/15 which was required under the Account and Audit Regulations.

128.3 One member referred to IT problems experienced as a whole and asked whether IT were able to cope with the necessary transfers for implementation of Tricuro, asset reviews and service transfers. The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management stated that the Council relied heavily on IT to deliver its business and he reminded members that the Assistant Chief Executive had reported on the importance of the Smarter Computing programme at the last meeting, that these items were under his control and that he would take action to address any issues that emerged. It was recognised that the Council needed to be careful in its decisions around downsizing in that certain elements were needed to be maintained in order to achieve other targets through the Forward Together Programme.

128.4 Members questioned the drop in average performance and the length of time taken to produce final reports. The Director of Planning explained that much of SWAP’s work was advisory and responsive and he was disappointed that the five day target had not been met but reminded members that final reports also relied on responses from within Directorates. The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management added that this measure was a partnership measure established by SWAP and that the maximum time should be ten days, with the expectation that performance should be closer to the five day target. SWAP officers were also attending Directorate Management Teams to highlight the need for a quicker response to audit findings.

Noted

Outside Bodies

129. No reports had been received from members appointed to Outside Bodies, Joint Committees and Consultative Panels which related to the Chief Executive’s Department.

Member Champions

130.1 No reports from Member Champions had been received.

130.2 A member highlighted the fact that a Policy Development Panel had recently been established on Trading Standards without him as Member Champion being invited to take part. He had been advised that Member Champions could not take part in such Panels when he thought it essential for them to be involved when their areas of responsibility were under review. He asked that this practice be reviewed.

Resolved

131. That the officers be asked to review the involvement of Member Champions in the work of Policy Development Panels regarding their areas of responsibility.

Farewell

132. The Chairman drew attention to the fact that the Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications would be leaving the Council at the end of the week. He thanked him for his work for the Committee and wished him well for the future.

Questions from County Councillors

133. No questions were asked by councillors under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting duration: 12.30pm to 2:20pm

Annexure

Statement from Mr John Porter

My presentation refers to the Cabinet meeting on 13th May.
The background paper was biased with no addressing the width constraints and consequent damage in Melbury Abbas.

The paper omitted the option of temporary re-opening to light traffic only. When this omission was queried, an irrational reason was offered.

The risk assessments supporting the report ignore the danger and damage which the proposed re-opening would impose beyond Dinah's Hollow. A stated risk mitigation will not be implemented.

Cabinet failed to discuss the problems highlighted to them in advance.

Statement from Paul Champagne

Ref. Cabinet Meeting of 13th May: Decision to temporarily Reopen Dinah's Hollow

This decision was based on inappropriate and selectively incomplete risk analyses. As a result, Cabinet failed to discuss key aspects. DCC's unstated policy of transferring as much traffic as possible from the A350 to the C13 given the relative political weights of the A350 and haulier's lobbies was not considered, nor why newly proposed traffic mitigation measures now presented acceptable risks to the public. The omission of the option to reopen to light traffic only, is explained by the first point and is inexcusable in the context of the second. Community cohesion and public confidence have thereby been further damaged.

Joint Statement from Robin East and Judith Morgan**The A350 Community Group**

We are members of the A350 Community Group which represents parishes and enterprises between Shaftesbury and Blandford with the aim of improving transport links along the North/South Dorset corridor.

On the 6th March we wrote to Ms. D Ward, Chief Executive of DCC urging DCC to reopen Dinah's Hollow; on the 13th May we attended the DCC Cabinet meeting to present our case in support of that action.

The reasons we wish to address the DCC Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the 10th June are;

1. to respond to the request made by Melbury Abbas & Cann PC for the DCC Audit & Scrutiny Committee to consider the Cabinet's decision, made on the 13th May, to reopen Dinah's Hollow to ALL traffic;
2. to explain the information we provided to DCC to support the re-opening of Dinah's Hollow to ALL traffic.

I will address the social environmental and economic issues and my colleague, Ms Judith Morgan will address the background information and safety issues.