

DORSET COUNCIL - RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 JULY 2019

Present: Cllrs Piers Brown (Chairman), Mike Parkes (Vice-Chairman), Andy Canning, Brian Heatley, Sherry Jespersen, Howard Legg, Julie Robinson and David Shortells

Also present: Cllr Tony Alford (Cabinet Member for Customer, Community and Regulatory Services)

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Dawn Adams (Head of Procurement (Interim)), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beryl Ezzard and Barry Goringe. Apologies were also received from Councillor Tony Ferrari (Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Assets).

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

3. **Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered its terms of reference.

Members noted that the Council's constitution would be reviewed at the end of its first year and any proposed changes to terms of reference would be fed into that review for consideration.

Noted

4. **Public Participation**

There were no statements and questions from Town and Parish Councils at the meeting.

There were no public statements and questions at the meeting.

5. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

6. **Corporate and Political Structure and how these relate to the Resources Scrutiny Committee**

The Executive Director - Corporate Development (S151) provided information on areas which the Committee could explore as part of its remit. These covered the following Cabinet Portfolio areas - (i) Governance, Performance and Communications, (ii) Corporate Development and Change and (iii) Finance, Commercial and Assets and (iv) Assets and Property.

Lead officers were (i) the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director - Legal and Democratic Services (ii) the Executive Director - Corporate Development (S151), the Corporate Director - Digital and Change, and the Corporate Director - HR and OD, (iii) the Executive Director - Corporate Development (S151) and Corporate Director Finance and Commercial, and (iv) the Executive Director - Place and the Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure.

The structure chart provided would be updated when permanent postholders were appointed.

The Chairman welcomed this information as it indicated areas the Committee might wish to scrutinise in order to ensure that the Council was delivering the best possible services to its residents within its available resources.

One member raised the concern that there may be overlaps or gaps with areas covered by the Scrutiny Committees. In response the Chairman explained that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees met regularly to share and discuss scrutiny items to avoid duplication and omissions.

With reference to scrutiny of the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the Committee had a role to scrutinise any assumptions used in budget setting whilst other Scrutiny Committees had a role to scrutinise the service delivery aspects. It would be for the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to ensure that scrutiny was not duplicated and to identify any gaps and who should scrutinise them. The Executive Director agreed to include the Budget and the MTFP in any future editions of the structure chart.

Attention was also drawn to previous persistent overspending in some areas and the use of reserves to balance the books. This posed the question as to whether budget setting was realistic and the need to explore this and learn from it. It was recognised that budget setting would come under the Committee's remit whereas in year variances would be scrutinised by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

In summary the Chairman stated that the Committee had the ability to scrutinise anything as long as there was some added value in doing so.

Noted

7. How do we reach the decision to Tender

The Chairman explained that he had asked for this item to be on the agenda in order to explore whether there was scope for the Committee to scrutinise the procurement process or any part of it to ensure it was the best it could be. Any areas identified for future scrutiny could be added to the work programme.

The Committee then received a presentation from the Head of Procurement (Interim) which set out the tendering process, including how the decision to tender was reached, and the subsequent evaluation and award process.

During the presentation members noted that:-

- as part of Local Government Reorganisation work had identified ongoing contracts and spend from within the County, District and Borough Councils and checks were still being carried out to ensure that none had been missed;
- many of the contracts were with Dorset vendors thus supporting local spend;
- the process took into account the Social Value Act and the desire to grow the Dorset pound, local business and local supply chains;
- the Procurement Team was centralised and were experts in managing the process;
- the team carried out contract management and compliance and provided advice on the appropriate procurement process, risk and challenge;
- the team had a close working relationship with commissioners, who were Directorate based, in order to obtain value for money for the Council and to ensure the right supply route was taken;
- templates on the commissioning cycle were available to help officers;
- forward planning was key to ensuring value for money, to identify what would be needed and how this could best be obtained in order to make savings;
- the contracts database identified contracts for review two years before they were due to renewal;
- a model was used to identify the criteria for price and quality to be used in the tendering process in order to get the best outcome. This was discussed with business areas and signed off according to the scheme of delegations;
- the Executive Director - Corporate Development (S151) and the Corporate Director - Legal and Democratic Services ensured any Cabinet reports on procurement would include a business case in order to inform any decision;
- the Constitution provided exceptions to procedure contract rules;
- the tender evaluation process needed to demonstrate value for money; and
- further presentations or workshops could be provided for members in order to increase their knowledge.

The need for the Council to be able to develop the market supply in areas like adult social care was highlighted and identified as a possible item for future scrutiny. It was explained that joint work between the Council, the Dorset

Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS partners and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council was ongoing to address this.

Attention was also drawn to the importance of transformation for the new Council as part of its strive for savings and that this needed to be reflected in commissioning.

Items identified for possible future scrutiny were: member involvement in the procurement process; the weighting and assumptions used for tendering; and member involvement on lesser spend in local communities.

Members thanked officers for the informative presentation. A workshop on the Committee's forward plan would be held later that day and the information provided used when topics for future scrutiny were identified.

Noted

8. Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan which had been published on 1 July 2019.

The Chairman explained that the Cabinet's Forward Plan would be used in an informal session being held later that day to help identify issues for inclusion on the Committee's work programme.

Noted

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.06 am

Chairman

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