

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2014 at 6.30 pm

Present:-

Cllr A Skeats – Chairman

Cllr S Butler – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M C Birr, Cllr A A J Clarke, Cllr J P Holland, Cllr Mrs P A Hymers,
Cllr J E Little, Cllr B E Mortimer and Cllr J L Wilson

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs B T Manuel

Apologies: Cllr Mrs S J Burns, Cllr D B F Burt, Cllr R D Cook, Cllr R C Dudman,
Cllr P J Edwards and Cllr Mrs A Holland

242. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

243. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 and the Special Meeting held on 7 October 2014 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

244. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act - Annual Partnership

The Solicitor to the Council submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were requested to consider the Annual Update on the use of covert surveillance by the Council.

The Committee discussed the Annual Update and in relation to this were advised that the Induction Programme in May 2015 would include RIPA training as part of the induction.

RESOLVED that Members noted the details of the report regarding the usage of covert surveillance pursuant to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

Voting: Unanimous

245. Staff Survey Action Plan Update Quarter Two Update

The Head of Organisational Development submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were provided with an update on the delivery of the staff survey action plan.

Members discussed the issue of appraisals and whilst it was felt that it was a positive step that the percentage of staff to have received an appraisal had risen to 88% that concern was expressed that this figure wasn't 100%. Members stressed the importance of every staff member receiving an appraisal, in relation to this it was felt that by 2015 all staff should be receiving annual appraisal. In addition it was felt that the carrying out of appraisals should form part of the managers performance.

Members further discussed the role of personnel in respect of appraisals and questioned why the personnel department weren't involved more with appraisals.

Further to this Members discussed the work of the change agents and training for staff.

Members were reminded that a further report will be submitted to the March meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

Voting: Unanimous

246. Customer Services Update

The Head of Organisational Development submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were provided with an update on the partnership's customer services.

Members were advised that abandoned calls were down to 2% and that many of the outstanding issues had now been resolved. Members queried whether other authorities had been visited when looking to use Lync? In relation to this Members were advised that although other authorities weren't visited, that we weren't the first authority to use this system, and that unfortunately the roll out had coincided with some other issues.

Concern was expressed over there still being issues, particularly with regards to calls relating to Planning. In relation to this Members were advised that Officers had been sitting down with individual users to ensure that their call forwarding was set up correctly which should ensure that all calls are dealt with in the agreed way.

The Shadow Lead Member for Performance (Councillor Clarke) advised that he had had an in-depth session with the Head of Organisational Development, and that he was satisfied that all of the problems had been identified, and that work was being carried out to deal with these issues.

Members expressed the importance of the matter, particularly in relation to reputational issues. And in relation to this highlighted the importance of Members being kept up to date regularly.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

Voting: Unanimous

247. Shadow Lead Members

A verbal update was provided by the Shadow Lead Members on work that they had undertaken since the previous meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee:-

- Councillor Wilson (Economy) advised that he had attended the Growth Board meeting on 28 October along with Councillor Mrs Bath (Portfolio Holder for the Economy – Christchurch Borough Council), and officers Dave Barnes and Nick James. The Board was updated on the LEP. Councillor Wilson further advised that Local Businesses had been invited to attend one of the Christchurch and East Dorset Growth Plan Launch events, the first two of which had already sold out. Councillor Wilson informed Members that he would be attending the event and would continue to shadow Councillor Tong.
- Councillor Butler (Environment) advised that he had attended several events over the last few weeks. Councillor Butler expressed concern with regards to the overspend by the Dorset Waste Partnership and the subsequent financial implications to the Council. Councillor Butler advised that the overspend had been reported to be due to factors relating to and increase in waste production, a reduction in recycling income, the cost of the hire of vehicles and the high levels of sickness. Members expressed concern with regards to this issue and requested that a Members Briefing be organised as soon as practicable in order that all Members may be briefed on the matter.

In addition Councillor Butler updated Members with regards to the ongoing Fly-Tipping task and finish group which had had its first meeting and the ongoing Community Governance Review.

- Councillor Clarke (Performance) advised that he had had another very useful meeting with Cllr Paul Bennett reviewing issues connected with Planning, including the outcome and progress of the Peer Challenge, and also items from the recent Partnership Board agenda and telephony matters. Progress on the Electoral Review of Towns and Parishes was discussed as were issues arising from the Dorset Waste Partnership relating to budget shortfall and proposals for garden waste and consultation on Household Recycling Centres.

Councillor Clarke has met with David Barnes and Matti Raudsepp for a briefing and discussion of issues relating to telephony and ICT. The former included call handling, response times, resolution at first point of contact, 'abandoned call' rate, staff practices if away from desk, Link Client software issues at the outset, etc. These will be addressed at the report on customer service at the meeting on 18 November.

ICT issues were also discussed, including the mix of up to date provision and the problems associated with legacy systems. The new system in Planning, towards which a major grant had been gained, was going out for procurement with likely deployment in

February, completed in May. An independent review of the network would be taking place to assess efficiency and three companies were being approached. Problems associated with power fluctuations and outages were discussed, including the lack of generator back-up at CBC from where our data emanated. Protective shutdown had been automatically initiated on a number of occasions due to fluctuations in supply. After May, a member digital working project was scheduled to explore efficient digital conduct of business, including reporting problems/issues.

It was agreed that January would be a suitable time for a report to Scrutiny on ICT, possibly in bullet point format, covering issues, solutions, timescales.

In both the discussion with Paul Bennett and with David Barnes and Matti Rausepp, the capacity of Legal Services and ability to commit to standards of service to the planning process were considered, including the implications for the efficient progression of major development schemes and Section 106 agreements. Progress in this matter would be reported in the New Year.

Cllr Clarke has waited for confirmation from the Finance officers regarding the timing of availability of budget information for presentation to and discussion by the Task & Finish Group which he has been asked to convene for a single meeting. Last week, it was confirmed by Finance that the earliest date for draft budget information was Friday, 30 January. The Task & Finish will thus need to convene as soon as possible on or after that date. Cllrs Birr, Hymers and Little have agreed to join the Group. The earliest availability for Dan Povey is Monday 2 February and the Group will meet on that date. To ensure access to the earliest information possible, Cllr Clarke has asked to attend the Chairman's briefing for the Resources Committee on 27 January when the draft papers will be finalised. The Leader of Council has kindly agreed to this – and, indeed, issued an open invitation to all such briefings.

The timing of the Task & Finish Group is later than anticipated and will thus not be in time to report to Scrutiny & Policy Dvpt on 20 January. This presents a choice: either there could be a provisional extra Scrutiny meeting scheduled before Resources on 11 February or the Group could express any concerns/points direct to Resources, probably after consultation with the Chairman of Scrutiny. The latter route does, however, mean that the T & F would not report to its parent committee.

- Councillor Mortimer (Community) advised that he had attended several useful meetings and that Councillor Mrs Manuel continued to keep him involved in relevant matters.
- Councillor Birr (Housing) advised that it was with regret that he was standing down as the Shadow Lead for Housing, but that following the difficulties with making contact with the relevant Lead Member he had found the experience frustrating and as such would be stepping down.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the updates from the Shadow Lead Members be noted;**
- (b) that Councillor Mrs P Hymers be appointed as the Shadow Lead for Housing.**

Voting: Nem.Con.

248. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted it is likely that if members of the public were present during the following item there would be disclosure to them of ‘exempt information’ as described in the category indicated and they be therefore excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

249. Verwood Leisure Facilities

Exempt Information – Category 1 (Information relating to any individual (Personal information))

The Leisure Services Partnership Manager submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘D’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were updated on the transfer of the Verwood Leisure Facilities, progress to date, and future proposals for service provision.

250. Minutes of Scrutiny Panels and Joint Committees

The Minutes of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Committee were submitted, copies of which had been circulated to each Member of the Committee and copies of which appear as Appendix ‘E’ to these Minutes.

RESOLVED that the Minutes, as submitted, be noted.

Voting: Nem.Con.

251. Forward Plan

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘F’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the Committee’s Forward Plan be noted.

Voting: Nem. Con.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

CHAIRMAN