

PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2023

Present: Cllrs Shane Bartlett (Chairman), Andy Canning (Vice-Chairman), Piers Brown, Barry Goringe, Mark Roberts, David Shortell, David Tooke and Bill Trite

Present remotely:

Apologies: Cllrs Rod Adkins and Jon Andrews

Also present: Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Simon Gibson and Cllr Jane Somper

Also present remotely: Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke

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

John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Dawn Adams (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement), Jason Jones (Group Manager (Commissioning)), Owen Clark (Transport Planner), Sue McGowan (Head of Travel Dorset), Deborah Fiddik (Transport Planner - Public Transport), Jack Wiltshire (Head of Highways), Wayne Sayers (Transport Planning Manager) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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

David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance)

70. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

72. Chairman's Update

There were no updates from the Chairman on this occasion.

73. Public Participation

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

74. **Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from councillors.

75. **Commercialisation Transformation Programme**

The committee received and considered a report and presentation of the Service Manager Commercial and Procurement, which expanded on a report received by the committee in November 2023 regarding the Commercialisation Transformation Programme – “Being more commercially minded”. The report provided further detail and assurance on how the programme had set out a corporate approach to contract management to ensure that the Council maximised commercial opportunities and secured optimum value for money in the delivery of goods, services and works.

M Roberts declared an interest as a supplier to Dorset Council Adult Services in his own right and also as Chairman of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, who used procurement services in Dorset Council. Following advice from the Monitoring Officer, M Roberts confirmed that as he would not be going into the detail of specific contracts, he would remain in the meeting and take part in the discussion.

P Brown indicated that his employer had a contract with Dorset Council but confirmed that given the advice provided by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting, he did not consider his interest to be pecuniary.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, points were raised in the following areas:

- How the Council supported and encouraged local businesses, including small and medium enterprises, to submit tenders for business with the Council and how contracts could be arranged to encourage tenders from smaller companies
- The management of leverage contracts
- Work undertaken at the pre-contract stage, setting of selection criteria including social criteria, benchmarking and due diligence in order to get the best outcome
- The training available and upskilling of officers in procurement and contract management
- Discussions around outsourcing services and bringing services back in house would be considered as part of the contract management process
- The implications of the Procurement Bill which was currently being debated in the House of Commons including any potential impact on capacity within the Council
- Collaborative working being undertaken with other organisations.

The Chairman provided a summary of the points raised and further action required:

- The Council was considered a role model in terms of contract management and paid suppliers promptly

- There was a flexible approach within the Council in terms of how contracts were dealt with
- Shared learning was being undertaken across Council areas
- There was a willingness to work with other councils to get best value for Dorset and to seek quality services
- The implications of the new Procurement Bill were noted and the potential impact on capacity in the area
- The measurement of success was ensuring a positive culture of being commercial and good contract management within the Council
- A further update could be provided to the committee at an appropriate time.

76. Implementation review of the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Vehicle Access Policy

The committee considered a report of the Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy which provided information on the implementation of the updated Household Recycling Centre vehicle access policy since its introduction in May 2022. The report invited the committee to consider if further review of any elements of the policy was required. Detail of comments received on the revised policy was included as an appendix to the report.

The committee considered the information provided and discussion was focused in the following areas:

- The clarification of the policy was welcomed and a request made for information to be provided to all Dorset Council councillors and also to town and parish councils through the Dorset Association for Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC)
- Many issues and enquiries had been addressed through discussion with individuals and all formal complaints had been resolved
- It was noted that there had been no noticeable increase in fly tipping as a direct result of the policy
- The availability of the garden waste collection service was discussed
- Issues around cross border arrangements were considered
- The policy was considered to be lawful with the restrictions on vehicles supported through rational justification.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a summary of the points raised and further action required was provided:

- It was noted that if complaint levels were low and the situation with fly tipping was not getting worse, the policy could be deemed to be working and no further review was required at this stage
- A briefing note would be provided to all councillors and the DAPTC
- Assurance had been provided around the use of dual cab pick up vehicles
- Formal complaints had been resolved
- The policy was flexible and reasonable and conversations could be held with individuals to address specific issues
- Councillors were content with how cross border access issues were dealt with

- An assurance had been received that the policy was lawful
- A further update on the policy could be provided to the committee in February 2024 and the Chairman of the committee would discuss the issue of fly tipping and a potential future report, with the Chairman of the Place and Resources Overview Committee.

77. **Bus Service Improvement Plan 2022 update**

The committee received a report of the Head of Dorset Travel, which invited comments on the refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and feedback on the short-term delivery programme through to 2024/25.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, points were noted in the following areas:

- The position with bus services and connection into the public transport network in Maiden Newton, St Leonards and Alderholt were considered. Discussion with ward members could be held after the meeting where relevant
- Publicity of available services was a key theme of the BSIP and in addition, it was noted that parishes were good at publicising what was available in their villages
- The plan set out the aspiration to improve access to bus services but it was noted that without government funding, action was limited to goals that could be achieved through existing funding streams and greater partnership working
- There was regular engagement with key stakeholders and bus users
- The impact of Covid-19 of bus usage was noted.

At this point in the meeting, it was proposed by B Goringe seconded by M Roberts and agreed by the committee, that the meeting continue beyond the 3-hour limit as set out in the Constitution.

Discussion continued with points raised in the following areas:

- The Portfolio Holder noted frustration with the current position, thanked the committee for the questions asked and noted potential future actions to consider the issues in this area
- The plan set out two programmes – one that could be achieved with additional funding and one through existing resources
- Links to the concessionary bus pass scheme were considered
- Engagement with other councils was undertaken
- The involvement of town and parish councils was considered.

At the end of the discussion a summary of the points raised and further action required was provided:

- Due to the funding position, the short term delivery programme was focused on providing better services using existing resources

- Recognition of the aspiration to achieve funding in future for transformation work
- Ongoing engagement was undertaken with stakeholders and bus users to provide updates and understand customer expectations and with rail operators around connections between rail and bus services
- The report to highlight the potential implications for children and young adults living in rural communities
- A request to explore opportunities for town and parish councils funding and providing bus services for their area
- Recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on bus passenger numbers
- Opportunities for councillors to consider the issues, potentially through a cross-party group.

The committee noted the points raised by the Portfolio Holder and both supported and requested that the Portfolio Holder made further representations to Government in relation to the Council's unsuccessful bid for government bus transformation funding and the current position in respect of the delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

78. Transforming Cities Fund update

The committee considered a report of the Transport Planning Team Leader, which provided information on progress to date regarding the Department for Transport based Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) award and invited questions and comments in respect of the remaining programme.

Councillors discussed the information contained in the report and particular comments were made in respect of the Beryl Bike scheme and the need to review the location of some of the parking bays and the funding connected to the programme.

79. Performance Scrutiny

The committee considered the performance dashboard and highlighted some areas of interest. These included:

- Performance against targets relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Subject Access Requests – an update would be provided at the next meeting
- Short term sickness levels and staff turnover across the Council – a briefing note would be provided for the committee.

80. Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Councillors reviewed the committee's forward plan and noted items to be considered at forthcoming meetings.

81. Cabinet Forward Plan and Decisions

The committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan and decisions taken at recent meetings, which the committee could use to identify potential areas for post decision review.

82. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

83. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.55 pm

Chairman

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