PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JULY 2025

Present: Cllrs Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (Chair), Craig Monks, Rory Major, David Tooke, Jack Jeanes and Barrie Cooper

Present remotely: Cllrs Sarah Williams

Apologies: Cllrs Ray Bryan, Louie O'Leary and Alex Fuhrmann

Also present: Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Belinda Bawden, Cllr Neil Eysenck, Cllr Simon Clifford and Cllr Shane Bartlett

Also present remotely:

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
Jan Britton (Executive Director - Place), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Richard Freed (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement), Antony Littlechild (Sustainability Team Manager), Connor Pearson (Carbon Management Officer) and Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

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

11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting 26 June 2025 were approved and the meeting actions reviewed

12. **Declarations of interest**

Cllrs Simon Clifford, Nick Ireland and Shane Bartlett declared an interest in relation to the Shareholder Committee of Dorset Innovation park, and clarification of the role was provided by the Monitoring Officer.

13. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

14. **Questions from Councillors**

15. **An overview of the how budgets are set**

The committee recognised and thanked the Corporate Director Finance & Commercial for the provision of this report ahead of the introduction and scene setting provided before the councillor questions.

The discussion that followed covered off several areas such as;

- The approach taken by the finance team in terms of challenge to budget holders around their forecasts
- The business partner model taken by the finance team.
- The role of rebasing and the approaches taken to address any areas of consistent overspend
- The framework pricing approach
- Financial controls applied to hold actual spend close to budgeted spend.
- Large budget gaps and subsequent adaptations that are undertaken to mitigate those either at service, directorate or organisational level ahead of being rebalanced in the next year's budget.
- The role of controls-based testing.
- The role and importance of professional judgement.
- The inherent complexity of budget setting
- The positive approach to scenario planning and early engagement at multiple levels to drive savings targets.

Recommendations

A policy or approach to considering rebasing a budget area following consistent and significant discrepancy between forecast and actual spend.

A policy or approach to unprecedented or exceptional budget changes and approach to how that can be managed/mitigated including the political implications of those changes/ decisions

Actions

The Corporate Director Finance & Commercial to bring back the date of the last SWAP audit of budget controls

16. **An overview of the approach to procurement**

The Committee recognised the complexity and detail in the report and the report was presented by the Corporate Director Finance & Commercial who outlined the legislation and high-level practices of procurement

The discussion that followed covered areas such as:

- How suppliers were chosen and selected
- The approval process and the triple check (cost, invoice, receipt)
- Existing suppliers and the monitoring of their performance
- The weighting between quality, price and social value and how that was adjusted in practice
- The definitions of quality and their weighting

- The importance of the alignment of procurement processes with the council's strategic direction
- The officer process of purchasing items

Recommendation
That an approach of supplier performance to be considered and weighted as part of the procurement process.

That there is an urgent consideration given to the strategic document around the weighting of procurement practices to reflect the direction of the council

That consideration be given to the threshold ranges in the Contract procedure rules and the minimum requirements.

Actions
Corporate Director Finance & Commercial to feedback on the legal considerations of current supplier performance if that could be done.

Vote to extend was proposed by Cllr Craig Monks and seconded by Cllr Jack Jeanes.

17. **Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology: Progress Report - Summer 2025**

The Sustainability Team Manager and Carbon Management Officer presented the report overviewing the qualitative report showcasing the large programme initiatives and their progress.

The subsequent discussion pulled out several key areas including;
- The use of glyphosate and the balance between cost and requirement to manage weeds
- The councils role as a lead in the environmental and ecology practices to encourage practice changes in other sectors.
- The impact of the nature emergency and the role of the Nature Recovery Strategy
- Water ways and water quality
- The councils responsibilities, influence and policies that can be used

Recommendation
That waterways and water quality are given prevalence within the nature recovery strategy

A water quality task and finish group to be created to address the controllable factors and scope out areas

Action
The Sustainability Team Manager to update around the 30% nature recovery target

18. **Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme.

19. **Executive Arrangements Forward Plans**

The committee reviewed the forward plans.

20. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

21. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 10.33 pm

Chairman

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