

## **PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs Shane Bartlett (Chairman), Andy Canning (Vice-Chairman), Jon Andrews, Piers Brown, Brian Heatley and David Tooke

**Apologies:** Cllrs Rod Adkins, Barry Goringe, David Shortell and Bill Tritte

**Also present:** Cllr Ray Bryan and Cllr Spencer Flower

**Also present remotely:** Cllr Cherry Brooks and Cllr Jane Somper

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

Jan Britton (Executive Lead for the Place Directorate), Neil Turner (Service Manager for Network Operations), Mike Garrity (Head of Planning), Sarah Dackham (Digital Business Partner), Alison Turnock (Service Manager for Conservation), Anna Lee (Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement), Darren Hobson (Enforcement Manager), Naomi Macklin (Business Manager for Place), David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance), Chris Swain (Risk Management and Reporting Officer), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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

Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer)

**67. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**68. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**69. Chairman's Update**

At the request of the Chairman, the committee received an update in respect of 'Road/Streetworks, Traffic Management and Reinstatement', provided by the Traffic Team Leader.

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

- Repairs to grassed/verge areas after works and the need to raise awareness amongst councillors of the role of highways inspectors in this area

- There was regular communication between the Council and Hampshire County Council on highways issues including damage to verges by lorries
- Regular public communications were undertaken in respect of road works
- Work undertaken with partner organisations e.g. utility companies, with regard to their works on the highway
- Further information requested on financial penalties associated with the permit scheme
- How issues and complaints about road works could be raised
- Inspections undertaken to ensure the quality of reinstatements following works
- There was a role for ward councillors to report any issues in their area
- Further information would be provided to all councillors in the new Council term.

#### **70. Public Participation**

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

#### **71. Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from councillors.

#### **72. Planning Convergence and Transformation**

The committee received and considered a report of the Head of Planning, which provided an overview of the 5-year planning convergence and transformation programme, designed to help shape and support the restructure of planning following the transitional arrangements put in place as part of Local Government Reorganisation.

For openness and for the public record, a number of councillors stated that they were members of planning committees as follows; Cllr S Bartlett – Strategic and Technical Planning Committee, Eastern Area Planning Committee and Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel; Cllr J Andrews - Northern Area Planning Committee; Cllr B Heatley - Northern Area Planning Committee; Cllr D Tooke – Strategic and Technical Planning Committee, Eastern Area Planning Committee and involvement with planning at parish council level.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following areas were covered:

- The importance of appropriate communications with residents, councillors and town and parish councils relating to enforcement activities
- Opportunities for improvements to reporting from bringing together systems
- A discussion on progress with the emerging Local Plan, the status of former councils' legacy plans and awaited Government guidance. It was noted that there was a need to progress at pace whilst taking into account consultation responses and new legislation and guidance

- Resourcing issues including reducing the dependency on use of agency staff and opportunities for apprenticeships. Resilience had been built across teams and this was supported by the new systems in place
- Detail of the service-wide change group put in place to build a one-team approach and wider engagement taking place, including with external partners
- Further information could be provided on the uptake of pre-application advice. This could be monitored through the performance dashboard
- Timescales for the audit work related to planning enforcement and the potential role for the committee for review in this area
- Budget available for the convergence and transformation programme.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a summary of key points arising was provided and further action points noted as follows:

- It was noted that there were opportunities for improved reporting from bringing planning systems together
- There was a need to continue to improve key communications around enforcement for residents, councillors and town and parish councils
- Further information to be provided to committee members on uptake of pre-application advice. The committee could continue to monitor uptake through the performance dashboard
- There was a future role for councillors in the work towards the review of the enforcement policy and a request for a regular report to the scrutiny committee in relation to enforcement issues
- Information to be provided to all councillors as part of the post-election induction programme on progress with the emerging local plan and status of legacy plans and the alignment with the national planning policy framework. In addition, a briefing note to be provided to the committee.

The Chairman thanked the planning team for their work undertaken in this area.

### 73. **Performance Scrutiny**

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

- Staff sickness levels were being monitored and work undertaken with HR Business Partners on the metrics being used. Some trends were improving and it was noted that target levels may require review
- There was a request for a future report to the committee on benchmarking data associated with staff turnover levels
- There was a need to review targets set in some areas to allow for more flexibility. The committee asked for Legal to reconsider the current target associated with land charges – this would be picked up by the Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance
- The format and display of the dashboard was currently being reviewed.

### 74. **Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

Councillors noted the draft work programme for the committee for 2024/25.

**75. Executive Arrangements Forward Plans**

Councillors considered the Cabinet Forward Plan, which the committee could use to identify potential areas for post decision review.

In addition, the committee noted the forward plan for the Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Ltd and the Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence.

**76. Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

**77. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked the committee for their participation and input into the committee during the Council term and in addition, thanked all officers who had attended and supported the committee.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.17 pm

**Chairman**

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