

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 30  
NOVEMBER 2023 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor G Bagnall  
Councillors M Ahmed, R Gooding, R Haynes, S Luck, A Reeve  
and G Sell.

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Director of Corporate Services), B Brown (Director of Environmental Services), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), A Knight (Director of Business Performance and People) and S Lewin (Economic Development Manager).

Also in Attendance: Councillor J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Planning Councillor N Hargreaves (Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy) and Councillor N Reeve (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change).

**SC22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Criscione, Donald and Gregory.

**SC23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

**SC24 CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Cabinet forward plan was noted.

**SC25 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

The Director of Corporate Services said to note that the Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan had moved to the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting and the Walden Place report would be added when a date was finalised.

**SC26 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Director of Environmental Services gave a performance update, the presentation is appended to the minutes.

Councillor Reeve apologised that there had been no written report, he said that the Service was considering what changes to make but there were no definite plans yet. He thanked the Environmental Services Team for their hard work during a difficult period. He said that a future plan for the department was underway, focusing on staffing, replacement of vehicles and delivery locations.

In response to questions the Director of Environmental Services said: -

- The 29% of recycled material related to dry recyclables which was a percentage of the total household waste collected including street bins, road sweepings and litter pickings.
- The replacement cost of a vehicle was in the region of £285K.
- The front-line fleet consisted of 9 large and 1 smaller vehicle.
- Whilst the front-line fleet were not in need of replacement, they were requiring more frequent repairs and therefore the older spare fleet were being operated every day.
- The growth of housing in the district and therefore an increase in volumes were causing on going issues that would only get worse as the vehicles aged.
- The main front line fleet were approximately halfway through their operating life and there were plans and budget in place for their renewal. It was the spare fleet of 3 vehicles that needed replacement.
- There had been some changes to key management posts, but these were being monitored and recruitment was taking place.
- There had been problems with the garden waste collection which had been redesigned to take into account an increase in customers, however a change to the tip location had made it impossible to accept any further residents onto the scheme.
- There were plans to change to a tipping location more locally and this would make a huge difference and enable growth in the customer base of what was a paid service.
- The option of electric vehicles had been considered but because of the size of the district this was not currently possible as they do not have the range and were double the price.
- Uttlesford were fortunate to have a Waste Recycling Officer who was working on an education plan for the coming year targeting specific areas that have issues.
- Essex County Council were funding a food waste campaign which included the addition of liners for the food waste caddy's.

This item would come back to the meeting for a further update within the next few months.

SC27

## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY DELIVERY PLAN - YEAR 3 PROGRESS REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy presented the Report he thanked the team for their hard work in assessing the applications and ensuring that the monies were paid out. He made the following comments:-

- There were three sources of funding, Uttlesford District Council (UDC) Post Pandemic Business fund, and two funded by the Government, UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).
- The UDC funding was for £1million to be spent by March 2024. The two Government funds together equalled £1.8million to be spent over three years up to March 2025.
- Appendices A and B gave a breakdown of the total spend on all three funds.
- No flexibility about the end date for the Government funds would be allowed.

- The UDC funds were paid on presentation of an invoice.
- The Government was sent a quarterly report of spend to date.

In response to questions the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy and Officers said:-

- This year there was particular focus on engagement with small and micro businesses.
- The Team produced regular newsletters, sponsored posts on social media, and engagement with different groups and business forums.
- There had been a noticeable increase in businesses engaging with the Council.
- There was currently not enough publicity promoting how the Council helped businesses within the district. This was often down to time and resources, however there was work under way to share and promote the work being carried out with small businesses.
- It would be helpful if posts and newsletters could also be shared on Parish Websites.
- There had been mixed results when trying to engage with Parish Councils but this would continue.
- The High Street Enhancement Fund was a shop front grant which prioritised town centres and encompassed new signage, gutters, repainting etc. It was a match fund of up to £5K paid in arrears on the receipt of invoices, on a first come basis.
- Great Dunmow businesses were aware of the funding available, but there had not been much of a response.
- It was not always easy to quantify the effectiveness of the support, the request for feedback to be shared with Members was noted.
- There were still funds available for the High Street Enhancement Fund.

## SC28 **CORPORATE CORE INDICATORS 2023/24**

The Director of Business Performance and People introduced the report. A condensed version of key indicators was now dealt with through Cabinet, having previously been in the remit of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee.

She said that the report was for Members to note and to make comment on those indicators that were being used to monitor performance for this year.

She said that the indicators were benchmarked against statistical near neighbours.

The Director of Corporate Services said that it was not the role of the Scrutiny Committee to replicate the work of Cabinet and to drill into the indicators. He said that they were brought to the Committee to raise awareness of the monitoring being carried out and to take a view on how best they could be used within the work of the Committee.

The Chair said that some of the percentage figures were not clear and asked for more clarity within the report.

In response to questions the Director of Business Performance and People said:-

- There were 25 indicators and of those 6 had gone down since the last quarter and 10 were in a longer term decline. These areas were targeted and changes put in place to help bring them back up to target.
- The Blueprint Workforce Plan had been developed to support the organisation and employees and this could also help in managing sickness. The Director of Corporate Services agreed to circulate to all Members of the Committee.
- Performance against statutory obligations were reported at the Corporate Management Team meeting and monitored on a quarterly basis. This report was also taken to the Audit and Standards Committee.
- No long term sick details were individualised and reasons for long term sickness were not shared.

*The meeting ended at 20.35.*