

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 11  
JANUARY 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor N Gregory (Chair)  
Councillors M Ahmed, G Bagnall (Vice-Chair), C Criscione,  
B Donald, R Haynes, S Luck and A Reeve

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Director of Corporate Services), B Brown (Director of Environmental Services), K Clifford (Director of Housing, Health and Communities), V Reed (Climate Change, Lead Officer) and C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Councillors M Coletta (Observing) and N Reeve (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change)

**SC29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sell.

There were no declarations of interest.

**SC30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Scrutiny meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved as an accurate record with the following clarification.

The Chair requested that the minutes were amended to show that Councillor Sell had asked for the Environmental Services Performance Update.

**SC31 CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Cabinet forward plan was noted. The Chair said that the next Scrutiny meeting would include the budget papers and had been moved at the request of the S151 Officer to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

He said that the Corporate Core Indicators which were now in Cabinet's remit needed to be monitored to make sure that they were being actioned and observed by Cabinet.

**SC32 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

The meeting discussed and it was agreed that the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan would be moved to the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 meeting to allow more time for the budget and car parking items.

## SC33 CLIMATE CRISIS ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change presented the report and confirmed that a more detailed report would be brought to the April Scrutiny Committee which would include how the money had been spent, achievements against the spend and next steps.

He made the following points:-

- The action plan would be produced on an annual basis.
- The themes of the action plan were aligned with the draft corporate plan.
- £1.7 million of external funding had been secured.
- The headline that would be used going forward would be 'low carbon and high nature' to emphasise that climate change and biodiversity loss needed to be looked at together.

He thanked the team for their help and hard work.

In response to Members questions the Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change and Officers made the following comments:-

- The difficulties retrofitting older heritage properties was a national issue that was starting to become more prominent. Once the Government eased restrictions to allow for the addition of climate change features and insulation this would then be taken up within the action plan and the Local Plan.
- The Council's commercial investments were leased and therefore any improvements to the building with regards to climate change initiatives were the responsibility of the Tenants but these would be considered and looked at where possible.
- A carbon management plan will be a priority action to provide a baseline and a framework to measure progress going forward.
- The Council had a green tariff for its energy use and was currently tied into a contract. The tariff was more expensive, however the decision had been made to lead by example. This would be reviewed again at the end of the contract.
- Internally there was a new board being set up within the Council to oversee all activity relating to Climate Change. This would include the Corporate Management Team to ensure that all aspects and functions of the Council relating to Climate Change and Biodiversity were included.
- There needed to be a more collective approach to things that were not in the direct control of the Council such as sustainable transport. Maldon Council had started an integrated transport project which looked outside their boundaries and other Councils were replicating this approach across Essex working with support from Essex County Council.
- Plans had been initiated within Uttlesford District Council to devise a wider transport strategy with officers engaging with County colleagues, and this would be worked on going forward to bring together all the necessary stakeholders.
- Progress had been made within the Council, working closely with Planning on the draft Local Plan policies and with the Saffron Walden Clean Air project.

- The audit of grass cutting to encourage biodiversity and wildlife corridors had not been progressed but would be looked at shortly.
- The Climate Change Working Group had been paused, a working group in some form was needed and would be considered in the context of the new internal board being set up.

The report was noted.

#### SC34 **HOUSING COMPLIANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Chair said that the Scrutiny Committee had requested this item.

The Director of Housing, Health and Communities presented the report which was for noting.

In response to Members questions the Director of Housing, Health and Communities made the following comments:-

- There were some wood burners used in Council properties which had historically been approved for use.
- Asbestos remained in some properties, there was a register and a programme for removal.

#### SC35 **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY**

The Director of Housing, Health and Communities gave a presentation to the meeting. A copy of the presentation has been appended to the minutes.

She made the following points:

- In the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the statutory partnerships, known as Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) tackled crime, disorder, and the misuse of drugs in the district.
- There was a requirement within the legislation for the partnership to be scrutinised, usually on an annual basis in terms of the activity and delivery plans of the group.
- A Community Safety Action Plan 2024 to 2027 would be in place by the end of April 2024.

In response to Members questions the Director of Housing, Health and Communities made the following comments:-

- The Town Councils and Parishes were not involved in the forums but were consulted to discuss any issues within their areas.
- The action plan did not list standard items that were carried out as a matter of course as it would make it too long. It focused on the gaps and things that were missing and how these could be resolved.
- The Town Councils and Parishes could be consulted on how they would like to communicate with the CSP and how to report issues.
- It was important to make it clear to residents, Town Councils, Parishes and other bodies how to report incidences and who to report them to. Identifying the responsibilities of each partner.

- Crime within the report was reported by area and so crime specifically around the airport did not distort the figures.
- There were CSP audit days when partners and other Council departments like Revenues and Benefits and Housing repairs visited a specific area to discuss their issues and responsibilities. The Director of Housing, Health and Communities said that it would be helpful to have Councillors support at these events.
- Motorwise was a group for young people that had met before the pandemic which discussed driving related issues, this group would be reinstated shortly.
- The strategic risk assessment document was a very large and complicated document and would not be suitable to bring to the Committee, however a snapshot could be provided with details of types of crime, whether they were rising or falling and local priorities.
- Areas of concern and dissatisfaction could be brought to the CSP in general terms but it could not be related to specific incidences as the group did not deal in high level detail.
- The group was a collaboration between partners to see what could be done together, it did not have the power to hold one of the partners to account.

*The meeting ended at 20.26.*