



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillor T Jay (Chair), Councillors B Price, S Goodall, Dr S Peuple, P Standen, M Summers and P Thurgood

The following officers were present: Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), John Day (Knowledge, Performance and Insight Co-ordinator), Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer), Jodie Small (Legal, Democratic and Corporate Support Assistant) and Adam Deakin (Technical Infrastructure Engineer)

Apologies received from: Councillor(s) M Oates

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020 were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor Dr Simon Peuple and seconded by Councillor Simon Goodall)

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

40 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair reported to the Committee that at the Cabinet meeting on 22 October there was an item on Reset and Recovery which outlined the Council's proposed approach to recovery and reset in response to the pandemic. As part of that item, Cabinet agreed to establish a Recovery and Reset meeting to monitor, scrutinise and support the delivery of the programme. At the Cabinet meeting on 12 November 2020 the Leader confirmed the membership for that meeting.

41 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair reported that he had attended Cabinet on 22 October 2020 to make this Committee's recommendation to Cabinet in respect of the Update on

Potential Legal Actions and he reported that Cabinet noted the recommendation that the Leader of the Council be involved in any decisions in respect of any legal proceedings, in addition to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

42 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET / COUNCIL

There were no items referred for the Committee's consideration.

43 2020/21 FORWARD PLAN

There were no new items identified for this Committee's consideration from the Forward Plan at this time, which were no otherwise covered by the regular review of the Quarterly Performance Report.

44 QUARTER TWO 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

This Report of the Leader of the Council provided the Committee with a performance update and financial healthcheck for the Quarter 2 2020/21.

The Chair welcomed the Executive Director Finance and the Knowledge Performance and Insight Co-ordinator to the meeting.

The Executive Director, Finance introduced the report and invited any questions from the Committee.

The Committee sought clarification in the following areas:

1. the Customer Portal project:

The Committee requested further information on the reasons for the delays to delivery of the project and sought a greater understanding of any issues encountered with interactions between different software suppliers. The Executive Director, Finance reported that since the end of quarter 2 he understood that the issues had been resolved and completion was now expected by 31 December 2020.

The Committee discussed the RAG status reporting for the project. The Executive Director reported the report reflected the RAG status as at the end of September 2020.

The Committee considered that it could be appropriate to undertake a post implementation review of the Customer Portal project, and that this item be added to the Committee's work plan, with a date for consideration to be agreed.

2. Cleaning Service:

The Committee requested clarification on the scope of the cleaning service and specifically whether or not the service would include the Castle.

3. Leisure Strategy & Leisure Services Review:

The Committee considered the milestones and queried when scrutiny could be engaged on these activities. The Committee considered that it would be appropriate for Officers to engage with scrutiny chairs in respect of the timelines for key projects to enable scrutiny to be engaged in the process in a timely manner.

4. Universal Credit:

The Committee queried why Council Tax data for Quarters 1 and 2, regarding arrears, showed as N/A. The Executive Director, Finance reported that the data for these parameters was not available in its normal format as this performance indicator relied on court summonses data (and courts had not been sitting). The Executive Director, Finance provided alternative data to the Committee. The Committee requested further details be circulated to enable members to understand the position further.

The Committee sought clarification on the reasons for arrears in housing rents occurring in respect of recipients of universal credit, and whether this resulted from initial delays in the first payments for universal credit being made. It was reported that there had been some changes by the Government in respect of this initial period and further details would be provided on this.

Revenues and Housing Income collection team staff were thanked by the Committee for their hard work in both achieving the reported income levels while supporting people at this difficult time.

5. Financial healthcheck queries:

The Executive Director, Finance reported that some funding for the CCTV project from the Housing Revenue Account had always been planned.

6. Town Centre Programme:

The Committee queried the green RAG status for the Gungate Masterplan. The Committee further commented and queried the accuracy of the RAG status scoring in some areas, given the lack of detail provided in places and potential COVID-19 impacts.

RESOLVED that the Quarter Two 2020/21 Performance Report be endorsed.

(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peaple and seconded by Councillor M Summers)

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that Officers are requested to ensure that the Scrutiny Chairs are advised of the timelines of their Corporate plan projects so there is an opportunity for scrutiny to participate in the process, as necessary.

(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peuple and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)

RESOLVED that Committee recommend that council staff in the collections team be thanked for their work at this difficult time.

(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peuple and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)

45 CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

It was agreed that the Committee's work plan would be as set out below, with the Chair, Councillor Jay, continuing to use discretion to update as necessary.

Corporate Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan 2020 – 2021		
TARGET MEETING DATE	SUBJECT	MEETING WHEN ITEM ADDED TO WORK PLAN
10 th December 2020	Update on corporate prioritisation	August 2020
3 rd February 2021	Quarter 3 2020/21 Quarterly Performance Report	
3 rd February 2021	Review of Write-Offs (interim)	July 2020
3 rd February 2021	Update on Potential Legal Actions	October 2020
3 rd February 2021	Review of Legal Services (post implementation)	November 2019
11 th March 2021	Solway trading company update	
Quarter 4 2020/21	Asset Management update	December 2019
June 2021 (tbc)	Review of Write Offs (full update)	July 2020
Dates to be agreed		
TBC	Market tender progress Update	August 2019
TBC	Parking Toolkit review	October 2019
TBC	Housing Repairs & Investment Contract Review	November 2019
TBC	Solway Trading Company Update (2x per year)	December 2019
TBC	Gungate Masterplan	January 2020

TBC	Review of Cabinet decisions over previous 12 month period (<i>circulate to members post June meeting for comment</i>)	June 2020
TBC	Customer Portal - post implementation review	November 2020

Upcoming Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings

10 December 2020

3 February 2021

11 March 2021

Chair