MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 21st JUNE 2022

PRESENT: Councillor T Jay (Chair), Councillors C Cooke, S Goodall, J Harper, S Peaple and S Smith

CABINET   Councillor Jeremy Oates

The following officers were present: Paul Weston (Assistant Director Assets) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

1   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received form Councillors D Cook and J Wade.

2   APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Daniel Cook be elected as Vice-Chair

(Moved by Councillor S Goodall and seconded by Councillor C Cooke)

3   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 were approved as a correct record

(Moved by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)

4   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5   CHAIR'S UPDATE

There was no further update from the Chair which was not otherwise covered on the agenda.

6   RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no responses to report as yet. The March Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered an update on Solway and the Chair reported that this item was due for consideration by Cabinet later this month.

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

No matters had been referred.

8   FORWARD PLAN

Ho further items were identified form the Forward Plan for this Committee's consideration.

9   QUARTER FOUR 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received the Leader of the Council's Quarter four 2021/22 Performance Report which provided the Corporate Scrutiny Committee with a performance update and financial Healthcheck, prior to the report being presented to Cabinet. The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council to the meeting.

The Committee commented and sought clarifications in the following areas:
1. The Committee requested that further consideration be given to the level of details shown in some of the graphs regarding council tax current year collection such that any trends could be more easily identified.
2. The project highlight report for Net Zero Carbon shows a due date of 2050, details of further milestones and relevant dates were requested. The Leader reported that a baseline report from appointed consultants was expected over the next two months which would assist in providing details of areas of focus, areas where the council can influence / control and enable comparisons with other local authorities, noting that the council had retained housing stock which contributed to the net zero carbon base.
3. The Committee considered that an alternate colour coding for items which were completed and in the past to be used, to differentiate from item which were coded as currently green.
4. Further clarification on the front facing reception for residents was requested to assist residents in accessing services. The Committee reiterated the importance of a front desk for residents. The Leader reaffirmed the commitment to provide a front desk and confirmed that he would provide a further written update to the Committee with further details on the planned front facing reception and when that was expected following an upcoming Recovery & Reset Board meeting.
5. In terms of universal credit and the numbers of residents now on this system, the Committee sought clarification on whether this remained an area which potentially impacted the council's revenues, in terms of council

tax or council rent arrears, where the Leader confirmed that the collection rates had remained consistent year on year.

RESOLVED to endorse the report, noting the comments raised by the Committee.

(Moved by Councillor S Goodall and seconded by Councillor C Cooke)

The Committee further considered that it would be appropriate to review the Quarterly Performance Report's content to ensure that it remained aligned to the Council's recently approved new Corporate Plan 2022-2025. The working group would report back to this Committee on its findings.

10   ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Assistant Director, Assets attended the meeting to provide a verbal update on the Asset Management Strategy, following his Report to the Committee in March 2022, which covered the following areas:
1. Revaluation of all built assets was completed.
2. Structural surveys of high risk buildings completed
3. All fire safety surveys completed
4. The draft Asset Management Strategy remained under review
5. The restructure within the Asset Management team was underway to provide additional resource and to facilitate activities to generate income for the council.
6. The Asset Management strategy was expected to be ready to be presented to Cabinet in October / November 2022
7. Once the strategy was approved, there would be a process to categorise the properties as red, amber or green, with actions plans developed as a consequence, and it was expected that the implementation would take 3-5 years.

The Committee commented and sought clarifications in the following areas:
1. Whether there were disposals and /or acquisitions policies and how they operated, where it was confirmed that there was a disposal strategy however, there was not an overarching acquisitions policy as any acquisition would generally be aligned to a specific project.
2. Whether there was a properties at risk register, where the Assistant Director reported that the work currently being undertaken would identify those properties and the reasons for being categorised as "red", whether on the grounds of costs, condition, income or otherwise which would inform the action plan for those properties. It was further reported that properties were held for different purposes; as heritage properties, investment properties and operational properties, and that these purposes would also feed into any action plan, although properties could be redesignated / repurposed if required.
3. The timeframes for any action plans where the Committee sought assurance that timescales would be set. The Assistant Director reported

that timeframes and budgets would need to be determined as part of each asset's action plan.

4. How the net zero carbon targets would be addressed in the Asset Management Strategy, where the Assistant Director reported that this would be a factor in the costings, and how we considered our liabilities, and it was expected that in terms of housing stock there would be higher standards which could impact on costs.

5. Whether the Assets team was resourced to deliver the work anticipated, where the Assistant Director reported that the team had restructured to complete these activities and to release qualified staff to carry out income generating activities.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director for his attendance. The Assistant Director and the Leader of the Council left the meeting.

11   CORPORATE SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2022-2023

The Committee considered it's work plan for the year and updated it as follows:

Corporate Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan		
TARGET MEETING DATE	**SUBJECT**	**MEETING WHEN ITEM ADDED TO WORK PLAN**
28 July 2022	**Street Market Update**	**November 2021**
16 August 2022	**Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Report**	
6 October 2022	**Draft Asset Management Strategy**	**June 2022**
17 November 2022	**Quarter 2 2022/23 Performance Report**	
17 November 2022	**Joint Waste contract update**	**June 2021**
8 February 2022	**Quarter 3 2022/23 Performance Report**	
Dates to be agreed		
TBC	**Update on corporate prioritisation**	**August 2020**
Bi-annual updates (March & September)	**Solway Trading Company Update**	**December 2019**
TBC	**Gungate Masterplan**	**January 2020**
TBC	**Reset & Recovery Workstreams**	**November 2021**
TBC	**Staffordshire Leaders Board**	**February 2022**

Working Groups		
TBC – which meeting Working Group to report back to	**Review of Quarterly Performance Report** to align with new Corporate Plan 2022-2025 Members: Cllr T Jay, S Goodall, C Cooke	**June 2022**

Upcoming Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings
Meeting dates: 28 July 2022 16 August 2022 6 October 2022 17 November 2022 8 December 2022 8 February 2023 9 March 2023

Chair

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