

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on Monday, 22 August 2016 in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council, Shepton Mallet commencing at 6.30 pm.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Damon Hooton (Chair), Steve Henderson (Vice Chair), Eve Berry, Roy Mackenzie, Terry Napper, Graham Noel, John North and Dick Skidmore

SUBSTITUTES:

Des Harris

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Lloyd Hughes, Danny Unwin, Phillip Ham, Alan Townsend, Peter Bradshaw, Simon Davies

OFFICERS:

Tracy Aarons
Stuart Cave
Sara Skirton
Caroline M^cCafferty
David Woodridge

Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Officer of the Scrutiny Board
Group Manager - Corporate Services
Committee Officer
Senior Planning Enforcement Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Emma Plumber

Somerset County Council

Agenda Item	Subject	Actioned By
1	Chair's Announcements The Chair explained the procedures in the case of an emergency and asked that all mobile devices be switched to silent. Hearing aid users were asked to switch their devices to position 'T'.	
2	Apologies for Absence There were none.	
3	Declarations of Interest There were none.	
4	Public Participation Items on the agenda: There were none. Items not on the agenda: There were none.	

<p>5</p>	<p>Previous Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25 July 2016 were accepted as an accurate record subject to the following amendment;</p> <p>Terry Napper was not present at the meeting and had given his apologies.</p>	<p>Caroline M^cCafferty</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Performance Management Report Quarter 1 2016/17</p> <p>The Group Manager for Corporate Services presented a report which provided an overview of the Council's performance up to the end of Quarter 1 (30 June 2016) relating to the strategic priorities and objectives of the Corporate Plan, and key delivery enablers. It was the first report to focus on the Council's new Corporate Plan 2015-2019. It set out progress so far against the new objectives contained in the plan. It marked a move towards a more concise and targeted style of reporting characterised by more use of graphics and with less narrative than in previous reports. This was part of a new performance management framework which, over the coming months, would evolve to include reporting on key service indicators.</p> <p>Managing performance was essential to ensuring that the Council was achieving locally important objectives, driving improvement and delivering value for money. The local priorities and objectives were set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2015/2019. This plan came fully into operation on 1 April 2016.</p> <p>As a result of the management restructure, the operational Group Plans were in the process of being reviewed and refreshed, and therefore the service level detail that was included in previous reports did not form part of this report, however there would be service detail included in the reports for future quarters, with an increasing emphasis on quantifiable key performance indicators.</p> <p>The Performance and Improvement Team was working with the new Group Managers to improve how the Council managed performance data, with a view to increasing the number of quantitative key performance indicators. The purpose of doing this was to improve the quality of management information to underpin decision making, increase public transparency, make it easier to compare with other councils, and demonstrate value for money to our communities.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan is supported by specific Objectives that would be undertaken in order to achieve our Corporate Priorities and Aims. For Quarter 1 2016/7, there were two Corporate Priorities within the Corporate Delivery Plan, underpinned by seven Aims supported by thirty one Objectives.</p> <p>Overall performance against our Corporate Priorities showed 31</p>	<p>Sara Skirton</p>

Corporate Objectives (94%) were green, 1 (3%) was amber and 0 were red at the end of Quarter 1. As this was a new Corporate Plan, work on 1 Corporate Objective was either at a stage where it was too early to report performance, or where work was not due to commence until a later quarter.

The Group Manager for Corporate Services informed Members that she would take any specific questions relating to the performance figures to the relevant Officers.

During the discussion that followed, Members agreed that these were an excellent set of figures and congratulated Officers on their efforts. The new layout was welcomed.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that a comparison of quarterly report figures with those of the other Councils in the 5 Councils Project would be forthcoming in due course, but that comparisons with the Council's CIPFA Group were already available. One Member was concerned about the complexity of measuring performance for partnership working.

In relation to one of the objectives underpinning the Health and Wellbeing Priority, Members queried the outcome of the pilot scheme for the GP Surgeries. It was clarified that the pilot was carried out at a Glastonbury Surgery to establish whether social prescriptions could be useful for residents whose health conditions may be linked to poor housing. It was stated that feedback had been poor during the first three months and that it may be preferable to use the Mendip Health Connections moving forward. In response to questions, it was stated that the pilot could be repeated in Wells or Frome. The Group Manager for Community Health Services had prepared a report on the pilot.

Members discussed symbols for indicating whether objectives were on track. The colour printing cost implications of the traffic light system was acknowledged and it was queried whether other systems could be employed. The Group Manager for Corporate Services stated that different ideas were being trialled and that feedback would be welcomed.

One member asked whether the council would be monitoring the time take to respond to residents' queries and service request. It was confirmed that this would be looked at.

In response to questions regarding the success of the Bath and West Showground LDO, it was clarified that the purpose of the LDO was streamline the planning process in readiness for future development opportunities. Additional discussions were taking place and the experience and understanding gained from the LDO would be used going forward.

Members commented that some objectives were vague and asked if the 'milestones' could be explained. It was felt particularly that

	<p>the objectives set out for Health and Wellbeing should be more closely defined. The Group Manager for Corporate Services acknowledged that there was further work to be done in this area.</p> <p>In response to questions regarding rough sleepers, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that following a Government Programme called 'No Second Night Out', a direct access community project had been set up. Rough sleepers could receive an instant referral and be directed to accommodation in Stratton on the Fosse. Any further needs could be identified and support accessed. One Member queried whether the Parish Councils had replied to questions with regard to rough sleeping.</p> <p>It was noted by Members that long term sickness had decreased by 30%, and it was queried as to whether this was achieved through redundancy of those on long term sick leave, or as a result of the introduction of home working. In response, it was explained that there were robust policies for managing sickness and that the figures demonstrated the commitment of staff during a time of significant change. Remote working had potentially enabled staff to achieve a better work / life balance. It was felt that remote working would be difficult to accurately monitor due to the lack of manpower and the variety of remote working situations.</p> <p>In response to questions regarding equalities issues, the Group Manager for Corporate Services clarified that Officers were asked, when logging feedback, if there were any equalities issues.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Scrutiny Board noted and endorsed the report.</p>	
7	<p>Local Enforcement Plan</p> <p>The Senior Planning Enforcement Officer presented a report which stated that the Council's Planning Enforcement Policy was last updated in March 2011. Changes to legislation and guidance since that time had resulted in the need for the policy to be updated to reflect those changes. In particular the National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 207 recommended that all Local Planning Authorities publish a Local Enforcement Plan. This document brought Mendip District Council in line with that recommendation.</p> <p>During the discussion that followed, Members felt that this was a critical document which would show the Council as behaving in an open and honest manner, and treating both residents and developers equally.</p> <p>In response to questions, the Senior Planning Enforcement Officer clarified the following points;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy stated that the Council worked to the guidance of the NPPF, and any further statements reinforcing the 	David Woodridge

importance of enforcement was unnecessary.

- There was a link on the Council's website from the planning page to the Planning Portal and the Interactive House, links to the legislation and explanatory notes. It was noted however, that there should also be a link from the enforcement web page.
- Though enforcement was discretionary, the need to investigate a complaint was statutory, and all complaints were taken seriously. The process, including the priority system was explained to all complainants.
- Each of the 15 types of enforcement notice differed, and each had their place in the procedure to address the many choices available.
- The intrusion of Travellers onto car parks was dealt with under other legislation and not reflected in the policy. The process differed for Council and private land, and other issues such as Human Rights came into play.
- Light pollution could only be addressed if lighting was improperly placed within planning permission.
- As a general rule, enforcement within a Conservation Area was similar to any other areas.
- Enforcement of planning conditions had been reactive to date, but a change in the wording of some conditions had resulted in more effective enforcement. However it was felt that where conditions were not followed in contentious applications, the Council would be informed.
- A planning condition could be enforced if the departure from the planning condition was considered harmful in planning terms and therefore unacceptable.
- A number of notices were being drafted with regard to various sites within the District.
- Processes were to be put in place, together with regular reviews, to ensure that Planning Contravention Notices were followed up.

It was suggested that upon adoption of the Policy, it should be included in the regular news brief which the Council provided to the press.

Members felt that this was a good document to take forward and discussed the necessity to strengthen the wording in Appendix E Paragraph 1 to send out a strong message with regard to enforcement.

It was also queried whether a line should be included to read that investigation was statutory whereas enforcement was discretionary.

It was proposed that the following sentence in Appendix E, Paragraph 1 be amended to read; "Aim to meet the following targets and we will monitor on a regular basis".

	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the amended Planning Enforcement Policy (Local Enforcement Plan) be adopted by the Council subject to the following amendment:</p> <p>Appendix E, Paragraph 1 to be amended to read; “Though Planning Enforcement action is discretionary, the investigation of complaints received is statutory, and all complaints are investigated. No national performance targets are set, but subject to workloads and available resources, the Planning Enforcement Team aim to meet the following targets. Performance will be monitored on a regular basis”.</p>	
8	<p>Forward Plans</p> <p>The Council’s Forward Plan was noted.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Forward Plan was noted.</p> <p>The Chair advised that a meeting to review the Scrutiny Forward Plan was to be held together with the Vice Chair, the Lead Officer and the Deputy Chief Executive.</p> <p>It had been agreed to move the Glastonbury Debrief to the December meeting so that Councillor Dick Skidmore could attend. Councillor Skidmore had passed on his comments in respect of the 2016 festival to the relevant officers.</p> <p>Councillor John North advised that the IT Task and Finish group had been delayed due to the Management Restructure.</p>	<p>Caroline M^cCafferty</p>
9	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>Councillor Roy Mackenzie gave a short statement regarding the Mendip Hub.</p> <p>The Chair wished to show his appreciation to Stuart Cave, whose retirement was approaching, for his help, advice and support with regard to the Scrutiny Board and wished Stuart all the best for a long and happy retirement.</p>	

The meeting finished at approximately 8.15 pm.