

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel (to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Monday, 21 October 2024

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs L M Birkett (Chairman)

Councillor F L Burgess (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: S Dugan, D J Hamilton, Miss T Harper, Mrs K Mandry and A West (deputising for P W Whittle)

Also Present: Councillor C A Bainbridge (Item 6), Councillor G Furnivall (Item 6) and Councillor S D Martin, Executive Member for Policy and Resources (Item 6)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology of absence was received from Councillor P W Whittle.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman addressed the Panel on this item to inform them that Councillor Whittle had requested an amendment to the previous minutes under item 7, Presentation on Council's Approach to Procurement and Contract Management. In that he declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as she is a qualified Certified Contract Management Professional and a member of various national/international bodies representing/influencing contract and procurement management.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment to item 7 above, the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 17 June 2024, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of Y-Services for Young People to the meeting.

The Chairman also made the following announcement:

I would like to inform members of the Panel that there is to be an additional meeting of the Panel which will take place on Monday 18 November 2024.

This meeting is to allow the Panel the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the draft changes to the Corporate Strategy before they are taken to the Executive meeting on 2 December.

Invitations for this meeting will sent out to members shortly.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTION

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

The Panel received deputations from representatives of Y-Services for Young People in respect of Item 6 – Support for LGBTQ+ People, and were thanked accordingly.

6. MOTION - SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the motion that was presented to the Council on 25 July 2024 by Councillor Furnivall.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor G Furnivall addressed the Panel on this item to present her motion.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor C Bainbridge addressed the Panel on this item.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor S D Martin, Executive Member for Policy and Resources addressed the Panel on this item.

Members expressed their thanks to those who presented a deputation to the Panel at item 5.

The Panel were very supportive of the proposal to fly the Pride Flag in June for Pride Month, and expressed a preference to have the flag flown from the flag poles in the town centre as this would give greater public visibility.

The Panel also discussed the proposal in the motion to explore how the Council can offer the opportunity for those communicating with the Council to be able to request to be addressed by their preferred pronouns. The Policy, Engagement and Research Manager addressed the Panel and explained that this would require further research to be undertaken to explore good practice and the feasibility of this, as the Council may be unable to offer uniformly across each service due to possible limitations of some current IT systems. This would form part of a longer project with considerations needing to be given to budgetary constraints.

Members were keen to acknowledge that the Council is already undertaking work on equality, diversity, and inclusivity in respect of its residents, however Councillor West suggested that more could be done to provide more external visibility of this work to the public.

The Panel confirmed that they supported the following points of the motion:C

- That all LGBTQ+ people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- To show support for LGBTQ+ people by flying the Pride flag, from the flag poles in the town centre, during the Pride month of June from 2025; and
- To explore the possibility of offering the opportunity for those dealing with the Council to be addressed using pronouns of their choice.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- a) Reviewed the content of the report, noting the duties of the Council;
- b) Considered the motion as referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel, and agreed with the points in the motion referred to in Paragraph 4 of the report.
- c) Commends the comments above for further consideration as part of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion duties;
- d) Recommends that dialogue with Y Services is opened during the course of this work, to ensure that their thoughts and views are taken into consideration; and

- e) That an update on the progress made by Officers in respect of this motion be provided to the Panel at its meeting in March 2025.

7. CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2023-24

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the capital and treasury management outturn for 2023-24.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- a) Notes the content of the report.
- b) Confirms that they do not have any comments to pass to the Executive.

8. GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE OUTTURN 2023-24

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the general fund and housing revenue outturn for 2023/24.

The Panel enquired as to why the spend for Streetscene was so significant. The Financial Planning and Audit Manager explained that this was mainly down to repairs that needed to be undertaken on the older vehicles in the fleet and the cost of hiring replacement vehicles to cover these whilst they are off the road.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- (a) Notes the content of the report;
- (b) Confirms that they do not have any comments to pass on to the Executive.

9. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy document, which will support the Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2029.

Councillor Burgess commented on the effectiveness of the summer CAT meetings and noted that this year there has been a poor attendance at these meetings. She enquired as to whether any consideration had been to raise the profile of these meetings with better publicity and marketing. The Policy, Research and Engagement Manager confirmed to the Panel that it can be challenging to encourage the public to attend these meetings and that they are looking to change their approach to the meetings, with the focus on Council representatives attending popular Community events to deliver messages rather than asking the public to attend a Council run event.

Councillor Harper enquired as to how the Council can tackle the issue of misinformation being spread, especially across social media. The Communications Manager explained to the Panel that misinformation is quite often not deliberate, and that people believe information that they see or hear, and this gets communicated to others. She explained that it is impossible to control or manage information in the public domain and that we can only

ensure that our communications are accurate. However, where misinformation has been identified, the Council does attempt to communicate with the groups or organisations that have publicised the incorrect information to get it corrected.

Councillor West requested that the wording on page 69 that refers to older people could be renamed as this could cause offence to some. In addition to this she requested the removal of the word SID when referring to the Intranet as it is an internal reference and would have no meaning to the public.

RESOLVED that subject to the changes requested above, the Panel recommends that the Executive endorse the Communication and Engagement Strategy at its meeting on 4 November 2024.

10. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Panel considered the Executive items of business which falls under the remit of the Policy and Resources Portfolio, including Executive Member decisions and Officer delegated decisions, that have taken place since the last meeting of the Panel on 17 June 2024.

(1) Capital and Treasury Management Outturn 2023-24

There were no comments received.

(2) Fareham Town Centre Regeneration - North to South Route

There were no comments received.

(3) General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Outturn 2023-24

There were no comments received.

(4) Update to Regulation of Investigatory Powers Policy (RIPA)

There were no comments received.

(5) CONFIDENTIAL - Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund - Land Acquisition

There were no comments received.

(6) CONFIDENTIAL - Purchase of Strategic Land at Faraday Business Park (South) - Updated Position

There were no comments received.

(7) Proposals for Alterations to Security Arrangements at Faraday Business Park

There were no comments received.

11. SCRUTINY PRIORITIES

The Assistant Director (Democracy) addressed the Panel on this item and confirmed that an update on the LGBTQ+ motion will be added to the Scrutiny Priorities to be reported to the March 2025 meeting of the Panel.

She then invited the Panel to put forward any further items of scrutiny that they wish for the Panel to consider. Councillor Dugan requested an update on the Communications Strategy to be brought to a future meeting of the Panel. The Communications Manager confirmed that this would be done.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.31 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date