

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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### MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2020 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Alan Hill (Vice-Chairman),  
Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Tony Trotman,  
Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman) and Cllr Suzanne Wickham  
(Substitute)

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Simon Jacobs and Cllr Philip Whitehead

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#### 12 **Apologies and Membership Changes**

Apologies were received from Councillors Stuart Dobson, Mary Douglas,  
Howard Greenman, Ruth Hopkinson and John Smale.

Councillor Greenman was substituted by Councillor Suzanne Wickham.

It was also noted that following the meeting of Full Council on 25 February  
2020, Councillor Stuart Wheeler had been removed from the Committee and  
Councillor Jo Trigg had been added to the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Wheeler for his considerable input to the  
Committee and to Overview and Scrutiny generally, which would continue. He  
also welcomed Councillor Trigg to the Committee.

#### 13 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 were presented for  
consideration and it was,

#### **Resolved:**

**That subject to a correction to Minute 6 to refer to £14.683m and £3.849m  
instead of £14.683 and £3.849, to approve and sign the minutes as a true  
and correct record.**

#### 14 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

## 15 **Chairman's Announcements**

With the permission of the Chairman, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Philip Whitehead, made a statement regarding the Covid-19 outbreak. He explained that public statements would be made daily and drew attention to the [Community Pack](#) of information which had been provided along with a dedicated [webpage](#). Government guidance and support was being sought and Members would be kept updated with regular briefings as the council's contingency measures were organised, for instance regarding attendance at committee meetings.

The Committee discussed the statement with the Leader and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Richard Clewer, including the need for coordination with and making best use of town and parish council infrastructures, and shared details of local community efforts to provide support to vulnerable people and signpost the public to vital services and information.

## 16 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

## 17 **Final Report of the Communications with Councillors Task Group**

On 20 November 2018 the Committee established the Communications with Councillors Task Group in order to review the experience of elected Members with internal communications across the council and make recommendations to ensure that communications received take into account expectations of Members and assist them in undertaking their roles as effectively as possible.

The Task Group met with the Cabinet Member, officers as detailed in the report, reviewed relevant documentation and surveyed all Members for their views on how they accessed information, what communications they received and issues relating that information and communication.

A statement was received from Councillor Trevor Carbin, Chairman of the Communication with Councillors Task Group, presenting the Final Report of the Task Group. In particular he noted available training sessions for Members on making best use of existing digital solutions to improve their own communications skills and how they receive communications.

The Committee discussed the Final Report, noting its suggestions for information and procedural updates for various methods of or policies for communication. These were accepted as useful recommendations for improving usage of current systems and methodologies, although some members considered that the council needed to be more proactive in exploring and taking advantage of newer, more integrated digital solutions such as Microsoft Sharepoint and Teams, which allowed for enhanced access to and notification of relevant information and events for Members.

It was noted that although not all Members were as experienced utilising digital solutions for communication as others, with the ongoing Covid-19 situation there was a need for Members to personally improve their skills for the many pre-meeting, briefing and other meetings they attended with the council and with other groups and individuals.

The Committee therefore endorsed the report but wished to additionally focus on the need for adoption of new ways of working and exploration of updated methods of receiving and access communications in the future.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

- 1) **That the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries considers implementing the following recommendations:**
  - a) **Updating the Council's Media Protocol 2015 via:**
    - **Including an up-to-date and accurate internal structure chart**
    - **Detailing how an individual councillor can seek assistance for media/press enquiries.**
  - b) **For emails circulated to all Wiltshire Councillors (e.g. delegated decision notices) to have the relevant division title listed first in the email's subject line.**
  - c) **For the Council's Directory to be updated by individual officers and managers to ensure accuracy.**
  - d) **For the planning notification circulated to a Parish Clerk to also be sent to the relevant division member(s) (where appropriate).**
  - e) **To encourage all members to attend the Council's Digital Hints and Tips sessions, to learn how to make the most of the technology available to them.**
  - f) **The Executive response, or an additional report, to include details about the current plans and opportunities being considered for enhancing councillor's and officers' digital communications.**
- 2) **Information and guidance on managing and joining remote meetings to be circulated to all councillors as a matter of urgency.**

18 **Joint Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Task Group Report on the Chippenham Station Hub Project**

The Joint Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Task Group was established to provide independent scrutiny of the SWLEP Board. The Chippenham Station Hub project relates to proposals to enhance the

station facilities and develop surrounding land for improved car parking, commercial and residential property.

The Task Group identified the station hub project to be evaluated and provide feedback for the SWLEP Board to consider with future projects.

Councillor Alan Hill, Chairman of the Task Group, presented the report noting the purpose of the activity to examine the process of setting up the project, how it was managed, and issues that had arisen through its development.

The Committee discussed the report and its conclusions, noting the complexity of the project and how often it had evolved, as well as the role of the SWLEP managing funding streams rather than all details of each project. The challenges for oversight of projects was discussed, and at the conclusion of discussion recommendations were endorsed as follows:

**Resolved:**

**That the content and conclusions detailed in this report be endorsed.**

**To the SWLEP and its future scrutiny body:**

**To ensure that the SWLEP's appraisal and approval processes of projects remain robust, because this review has demonstrated that an insufficiently developed appraisal and approval process is likely to lead to delays;**

**To ensure that delays remain monitored and addressed at the earliest opportunity, because this review has demonstrated that early, possibly avoidable, delays can have ongoing repercussions within a project (such as funding deadlines not being met);**

**To review and monitor the SWLEP's capacity to ensure recommendations 2 and 3 above, in terms of resources – i.e. adequate officer capacity to take direct action when issues arise whilst monitoring**

19 **Future Scrutiny of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP)**

The Joint Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Task Group was established to provide independent scrutiny of the SWLEP Board and the Joint Strategic Economic Committee (JSEC), a joint committee of Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council comprising members of and delegated authority from each Executive. Initially the SWLEP Board did not meet in public, but has done so since 2015.

The SWLEP was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in January 2019. This change of legal status changed the nature of the relationship between the SWLEP, Wiltshire Council as the Accountable Body, and Swindon Borough Council and necessitated a review of the governance framework

between these parties, which was the subject of a report to Wiltshire Council's Cabinet on 26 March 2019 and the JSEC was dissolved as reported to Council on 9 July 2019.

With the change in the status of the SWLEP, its governance and how it should be scrutinised have been reviewed.

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor Alan Hill, presented a report on future scrutiny of the SWLEP. He explained the SWLEP was appreciative of the work of the Task Group and was keen to establish its own scrutiny activities including involvement of non-board members.

The Committee discussed the report, noting that initial work of the Task Group had encountered some difficulty in engaging with the SWLEP, and that it was very encouraging that the value of the scrutiny process had been accepted by the Board to the extent of establishing a scrutiny process under their new governance structures. The Committee in particular thanked Councillor Hill for his work as Chairman of the Task Group in demonstrating to the SWLEP the value added by independent scrutiny. The Committee support appointed representatives to the proposed scrutiny panel.

At the conclusion of discussion,

**Resolved:**

- 1) To note the SWLEP current governance arrangements.**
- 2) To close down the existing joint SWLEP task group.**
- 3) To endorse the proposed future scrutiny arrangements between Wiltshire Council and the SWLEP, including the proposed Terms of Reference.**
- 4) To notify Swindon Borough Council and the SWLEP of this committee's decision with regards to the existing joint SWLEP task group and the proposed future scrutiny arrangements between Wiltshire Council and the SWLEP, including the proposed Terms of Reference.**
- 5) To delegate the appointing procedure for Wiltshire Council's representatives on the SWLEP Panel proposed to the Chairman and Vice-chairman of OS Management Committee.**

20 **Management Committee Task Groups**

The written updates from the Task Groups were received. For the Financial Planning Task Group it was noted the ongoing Covid-19 situation would likely result in changes to existing budgetary arrangements.

It was also proposed that a rapid scrutiny exercise be organised to look at proposals for community facilities funding, aiming to provide funds for projects for areas without a community campus.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To note the update on Task Group activity provided:
- 2) To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to review the proposed application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund with the terms of reference included under paragraph 9.
- 3) To receive the findings of the rapid scrutiny exercise and the Executive response at the Committee's next meeting.

21 **Forward Work Programme**

The Forward Work Programmes of each Select Committee were received along with updates from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each Select Committee.

Details were provided on upcoming work on Highways and Transport, Bus Service Funding, the Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group, the Care Quality Commission suspending checks and requests for establishment of three tasks groups, including a joint Children's and Health Select Committee Task Group.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

To note the current OS forward work programme and endorse the formation of the three new Task Group's proposed, which will consider:

- In-house foster carers
- A whole-life pathway for mental health
- Area Board youth service funding

22 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 2 June 2020.

23 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line (01225) 718504, e-mail [kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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