

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

27 November 2024

Executive Response to the Final Report of the Stone Circle Governance Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Housing to the Final Report of the Stone Circle Governance Task Group.

Background

2. On 12 September 2024 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee endorsed the Final Report of the Task Group.
3. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 27 November 2024.
4. The Committee endorsed the establishment of a task group under it. It was agreed that the terms of reference and effectiveness of the group were to be reviewed after 12 months. This resolution does not require an executive response.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

Recommendation No.1	That the council defines the purpose of both Stone Circle Housing and Stone Circle Development. The statement of purpose should include precise objectives and intended outcomes to enable ongoing scrutiny and to reference when reviewing performance and decision-making of Stone Circle Housing and Stone Circle Development. The statement of purpose, objectives and targets should be accessible to members and the public.
Reason for recommendation	<p>The task group recognised there was a difference in the purpose of Stone Circle Housing and Stone Circle Development which needed to be reflected in any ongoing scrutiny of the two companies.</p> <p>Members noted that there isn't a consistent statement of purpose used by all parties for either company. While this could allow for flexibility to meet changing needs, from a</p>

	scrutiny perspective, it may also result in a drift of purpose, making it difficult to assess objectively whether the companies are meeting their intended purpose.		
Cabinet member	Phil Alford	Lead Officer	Perry Holmes
Executive response	19 November 2024	select one option	Agree
Action			Success criteria
Officers to draft a definition of purpose of Stone Circle from a Council/Shareholder perspective for approval at a Cabinet Shareholder Group meeting.			Completed approved document.
Target date			Implementation date
January 2025			January 2025

Recommendation No.2	That the Cabinet Shareholder Group minutes are made available to all members together with a simplified version of the shareholder group terms of reference to clarify the group's role and responsibilities in relation to Stone Circle Group.		
Reason for recommendation	<p>To increase transparency around Stone Circle was a recurring theme in the work of the task group.</p> <p>To that end, the task group proposed it would be beneficial to increase awareness of Stone Circle with all members including its role in relation to the Council's business objectives, and the role of the shareholder group in overseeing Stone Circle activities.</p> <p>Making information more readily accessible could, it was hoped, encourage wider engagement and scrutiny.</p>		
Cabinet member	Phil Alford	Lead Officer	Perry Holmes
Executive response	19 November 2024	select one option	Agree
Action			Success criteria
Officers to action the sharing of minutes and the simplified terms of reference as proposed and add Members to the notification of the publication of minutes			Minutes and simplified terms of reference shared with all Members
Target date	January 2025		

Recommendation No.3	That the terms of reference for the Cabinet Shareholder Group includes clarification on the extent to which Stone		
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	Circle companies operate independently or follow Council standards in their operations.		
Reason for recommendation	<p>It was felt that further clarity was needed about the council's interaction with Stone Circle, a commercial company wholly owned by the council.</p> <p>The task group were unclear on the extent to which the two entities were aligned and wanted to understand whether the organisations worked to the same policies, standards and values.</p> <p>The shareholder group terms of reference could clarify further the extent to which Stone Circle companies operated independently or followed Council standards in their operations.</p>		
Cabinet member	Phil Alford	Lead Officer	Perry Holmes
Executive response	19 November 2024	select one option	Agree
Action			Success criteria
Officers to amend the Terms of Reference as suggested for approval at Stone Circle Shareholder meeting			Amended agreed Terms of Reference
Target date			
January 2025			

- The Cabinet would like to thank the Task Group for its diligent work and final report.

Proposal

- To note the executive response to the Final Report of the **Stone Circle Governance Task Group**.

Cllr Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing

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Appendices

Appendix 1 [Final Report of the Stone Circle Governance Task Group](#)