

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

6TH SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT:- Councillors Jack Lenox (Vice-Chair), Suhir Abuhajar, Martin Gawith, Chris Hanna, Paul Hart, Abi Mills, Sue Penney and John Wild

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillor Brett Cooper (Chair)

Also in Attendance:- Councillor Phil Black

Officers in attendance:-

Stephen Metcalfe
Jenny Kay

Principal Democratic Support Officer
Civic & Ceremonial Democratic Support Officer

17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th July 2023, were signed by the Vice-Chair as a correct record.

18 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR

There were no Items of Urgent Business.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

20 DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council to the meeting.

Members were advised that the Chair had invited the Leader of the Council to attend this meeting to update the Committee on policies and objectives for the administration, priorities for the district and relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny, including any areas where Scrutiny could assist or create a Task Group to look at a piece of work. An update on the progress with Frontierland was also requested.

The Leader advised that Cabinet had invited the LGA to Lancaster to work with the new Cabinet to focus on priorities and the Corporate Plan. The Leader offered to return to the Committee in the future to provide information on priorities on objectives.

An update on Frontierland was provided. A report was being considered by Cabinet at its meeting the following week proposing the establishment of a special project board to oversee the vision for the Frontierland site. Eight Expressions of Interest had been received which confirmed interest from the private sector in working with the council, stakeholders and the community to bring the land back into beneficial use.

The Committee went on to discuss the Canal Quarter project with the Leader and White Lund depot. Concern was expressed regarding the Council's approach to building maintenance specifically non housing. It was reported that responsibility for the maintenance of the Council's buildings had recently been transferred to the Chief Officer of Housing to align with the maintenance of Council housing.

Resolved :-

That the Leader of the Council be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

21 DRAFT PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report on the introduction of a Pre-Decision Scrutiny Protocol.

It was felt that the area where a protocol would be useful would be the way in which senior officers and Cabinet keep Scrutiny informed of the outlines of major decisions as they are developed, to allow for discussion of Scrutiny's potential involvement in policy development. It was reported that this would involve building in safeguards to mitigate risks around the sharing of sensitive information with Scrutiny members.

The Committee discussed whether a formal protocol was required or if a more inform approach should be taken.

It was agreed that initially, the Pre-Scrutiny Champion would meet with Democratic Support officers informally to consider the Forthcoming Key Decisions on a regular basis. The Committee agreed to consider the draft Protocol in the new Municipal Year.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Pre-Scrutiny Champion meets informally with Democratic Support Officers to consider the Forthcoming Key Decisions on a regular basis.
- (2) That the Committee consider the draft Protocol in the new Municipal Year.

22 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Committee considered the Work Programme report and the updated Work Programme. It was reported that the Chair and Pre-Scrutiny Champion had met with members of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss the topics that the Committee had raised at its last meeting.

With regard to the Ethical and Sustainable Investment Policy Formal Task Group, it was agreed that the Committee did not wish to continue this piece of work and to stand this Task Group down.

Considering the Eden Project, it was agreed to request a progress report later in the year.

The Committee went on to discuss the Property Portfolio Informal Task Group. It was reported that a new Property Group structure was now in place. In light of earlier discussions with the Leader of the Council regarding non housing property maintenance and repairs, it was agreed to request a report to update the Committee in the New Year, request a list of the Council's assets to be circulated to the Committee and to stand down the existing Task Group.

With regard to the Annual Health Care meeting, it was agreed that an update on the current model of the Health Care System be requested. The Committee would then consider if an annual meeting was required.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Work Programme report and Appendix be noted.
- (2) That the Ethical and Sustainable Investment Policy Formal Task Group be stood down.
- (3) That a progress report be requested later in the municipal year.
- (4) That with regard to the Property Portfolio Informal Task Group :-
 - i. an update report regarding non housing property maintenance and repairs be requested to be considered in the New Year.
 - ii. a list of the Council's assets be circulated to the Committee.
 - iii. the Property Portfolio Informal Task Group be stood down.
- (5) That with regard to the Annual Health Care meeting, an update on the current model of the Health Care System be requested. The Committee would then consider if an annual meeting was required.

23 FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The most recent Forthcoming Key Decisions were noted.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Jenny Kay, Democratic Services - email jkay@lancaster.gov.uk**