

**Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 23 January 2018 in Committee Rooms 1 & 2 - Deanes, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council at 6.30 pm**

**Members of the Scrutiny Committee in attendance:** Councillor N Pierce (Chair), Councillor G Falconer, Councillor I Tilbury, Councillor R Golding, Councillor P Harvey, Councillor G James, Councillor C Phillimore and Councillor J Richards

**Also present:**

Councillor C Sanders, Leader of the Council

**30/17 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Councillor T Robinson was replaced by Councillor K Rhatigan  
Councillor P Miller was replaced by Councillor L Edwards  
Councillor R Bean sent apologies

**31/17 Declarations of interest**

Councillor P Harvey declared an interest on Item 6 of the agenda – Electoral Services Update – on the grounds that he was the elections agent for the local Labour Party

Councillor G James declared an interest on Item 6 of the agenda – Electoral Services Update – on the grounds that he had been the elections agent for the local Liberal Democrat Party

**32/17 Urgent Matters**

There were no urgent items

**33/17 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2017**

The [minutes](#) of the meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**34/17 Performance Panel Update**

The committee received an update from the Policy and Performance Manager on the work of the Performance Panel. The update included the discussion on the Q1 Performance Scorecard.

Councillors commented on an error on the date which had been rectified and expressed disappointment on the indicators reflecting delivery of affordable housing moving from a green to amber status on the Red, Amber Green indicators.

**35/17 Electoral Services Update from the Returning Officer for Basingstoke and Deane**

The Returning Officer introduced the report which provided an update on the progress made with review outputs and any other relevant matters since the item was last considered by the committee in March 2017, covering:

- The independent role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer
- Details of the eight elections and referenda held in the last calendar year which passed off smoothly with no major queries or election petitions being raised
- That the Xpress software system used for running the elections was now included on the council's list of critical IT systems to ensure resilience
- An audit of Electoral Services requested by the Returning Officer was near completion
- Staffing arrangements within the Electoral Services Team
- Positive feedback from the Electoral Commission on the conduct of the 2017 Hampshire County Council elections

The committees' questions and comments during debate included:

- What action had been undertaken to collect data on 3,300 households that had not responded, and requests for comparable data on the number of households that had not responded from similar sized authorities and to have the 3,300 households broken down by ward.
- The improvements in the last year
- Concern over the short tenure of the previous Elections Manager

Officers responded, informing councillors of the use of hand held technology which had enhanced the electoral registration response rate, the use of locally held data to gain information for the electoral register and the improvements made in the last year.

The Returning Officer advised the committee of his intention to appoint the Interim Electoral Services Manager as Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

The committee expressed its thanks to the Electoral Services Team for their work, professionalism and the training provided for Polling Station Count staff which had led to observed improvement.

A councillor wished to have it noted in the minutes that he was not happy with the wording of paragraph 3.1 on page 15 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED:** The committee notes the report

36/17 **Proposals for the Policy and Budget Framework - 2018/19 Budget Report**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which provided a summary of the Cabinet's revenue and capital budget proposals for 2018/19 which supported delivery of the Council Plan and contained a forward financial forecast for 2019/2020, 2020/21, and 2021/22 prior to its consideration by Council.

The Leader gave a presentation to the committee which provided detail on the:

- Cabinet's budget approach which was to continue to provide high quality services with better value
- Investment proposals included within the budget.
- Consultation process

The committee asked questions of clarification and made comments on the proposed budget, which included:

- Concern over the impact that budget reductions by Hampshire County Council could have on services in the borough and in particular on public transport.
- Welcoming the ring fencing of town area Community Infrastructure Levy receipts, with the view expressed that similar consideration should be applied to unfenced Local Infrastructure Fund receipts.
- Comments on the impact of Universal Credit on the benefits services and local residents which included arrangements for those in rural areas to access community centres.
- The need to protect services for rural residents and access to recycling facilities in West Berkshire
- The impact of increases to charges for markets, burials and cemetery services
- The importance of 40% affordable housing provision over the medium term financial strategy period
- The need for regeneration investment plans to benefit existing communities

**Resolved:** The committee:

1. Note the report,
1. Request the Cabinet to consider its views on the draft Budget Report for

2018/19

37/17 **Review of work programme**

The Chair introduced the current committee work programme and discussed proposals for the future meetings.

**Resolved:** That, as there were no items scheduled for the meeting due to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018, the meeting be cancelled.

The meeting ended at 8.06 pm.

**Chairman**