

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 11 January 2018** at **6.00pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole
Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Chris Barker
John Bloodworth
Brian Harvey

Christine Mason
Nigel Roman
Reg Silvester

Also in attendance:

Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

195. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

196. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rona Burt and David Palmer.

197. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2017, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

198. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

199. **Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any other updates from the Chairman**

The Chairman attended Cabinet on 12 December 2017, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 9 November 2017, which was noted.

200. **Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture**

The Committee was reminded that on 12 January 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, setting out responsibilities covered under her portfolio.

At this meeting, the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide his annual update, and Report No: OAS/FH/18/001 set out the focus of the update.

The Cabinet Member was also provided in advance of the meeting with some key questions identified by Scrutiny Members on areas they wished to be appraised on during the annual update, which were included in the report along with responses, specifically:

- 1) **Rural Communities:** What proposals does the Portfolio Holder have to ensure leisure and culture is fully inclusive to all within Forest Heath, in particular rural communities?
- 2) **Rural Communities:** How does the Portfolio Holder propose to ensure that rural communities do not become the forgotten few?
- 3) **Rural Communities:** Is there a specific leisure and culture programme for rural communities for 2018?

Councillor Andy Drummond opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation to update the Committee on matters concerning his Portfolio since January 2017, and welcomed the new format in providing questions in advance. He was pleased that the Committee was interested in the subject of leisure provision in rural communities, and advised that by definition Forest Heath was categorised in DEFRA's Rural and Urban classification system as a Rural District. He highlighted a number of key points in response to the three specific questions highlighted above.

The Committee asked follow-up questions on leisure and cultural provision in rural communities, to which comprehensive responses were provided. Other areas discussed were the spending of S106 monies on leisure and culture, particularly for play areas; the Mildenhall museum which was run by volunteers; the Brecks Partnership and funding received for clearing the river and fen edge along the river Lark; and the early negotiations taking place with Suffolk County Council on the potential purchase of Brandon Country Park.

In particular discussions were held on the following:

- 1) **Renewal of play areas:** Discussions were held about the fact that play areas had a finite life and that there was a need to have some form of replacement programme to ensure that the facilities remained fit for purpose. To standardise arrangements across West Suffolk it was proposed that the council should be asked to consider whether it would be prepared to support and fund a cyclical replacement programme as there was currently no defined budget earmarked for that purpose.

- 2) Brandon new walk/run route: Councillor Silvester had some concerns regarding the new run/walk route and questioned the take-up as users had indicated to him, that they could not find the discs on the posts to follow the route.

In response the officer advised that the launch was well attended, and agreed to check the route and the location of the discs, which were a standard size on posts.

- 3) Parish Forums: Discussions were held on the relationship with leisure through the Parish Forums and questioned whether the council used the Forums to disseminate information on the various wellbeing programmes.

In response the officer advised that he had attended and spoken at Parish Forums about S106 leisure spend, and agreed to taken on board the use of the Forums in future to promote other West Suffolk leisure activities, in particular the West Suffolk Promoting Physical Activity Framework which the Council had adopted.

- 4) One Life Suffolk: Discussions were held on the One Life Suffolk and questioned how this was promoted.

In response the officer advised that One Life Suffolk was predominantly promoted and communicated via General Practitioner surgeries and hospital's but they had their own promotional campaigns and certain courses could be booked directly online subject to applicants meeting certain criteria.

The Committee on behalf of Members wished thank the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture and officers for their attendance, and **noted** the update, subject to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture disseminating information through the Parish Forums on the "One Life Suffolk" and the West Suffolk Promoting Physical Activities Framework document.

201. **Cabinet Decisions Plan: January 2018 to May 2018**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/002, which requested that members peruse the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the period January 2018 to May 2018, for which it would like further information on or might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

The Committee considered the latest version of the Decisions Plan, and noted that a number of items in the Decisions Plans were programmed in the Committee's forward work programme for scrutiny over the coming months.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the January to May 2018 Decisions Plan.

202. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/003, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested the Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance to cover in his annual update to the Committee on 8 March 2018.

The Committee considered the report and at the time of the meeting had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance. Therefore, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) would email the Committee asking for questions to be submitted to her by Wednesday 17 January 2018.

There being no decisions required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its work programme.

The Meeting concluded at 6.50pm

Signed by:

Chairman
