

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT
BOARD
28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR A N STOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T J N Smith (Vice-Chairman), P M Dilks, R J Kendrick, K E Lee, C S Macey, C E H Marfleet, N H Pepper and A M Hall

Added Members

Councillors R D Butroid, T R Ashton and M J Hill OBE were also in attendance as guests at the meeting.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Allison Kapethanasis (ICT Business Relationship and User Engagement Manager), Sue Maycock (Strategic Finance Lead (Technical)), Karen Tonge (Treasury Manager), Donna Fryer (Head of IT Architecture and Delivery) David Matthewman (Chief Information Officer) and Thomas Spencer (Treasury Officer)

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor J Brockway, Councillor M Brookes, Councillor I D Carrington, Martin Kyle (Church Representative) and Emile Van Der Zee (Parent Governor Representative).

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups Regulation 1990, Councillor A M Hall was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor M Brookes for this meeting only.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

40 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 AUGUST 2023

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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41 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor K E Lee to the Board.

There were no further announcements.

42 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

43 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

44 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2023/24 - QUARTER 1 TO 30 JUNE 2023

Consideration was given to a report by the Treasury Manager, which invited the Board to consider the Treasury Management Performance for Quarter 1 of 2023/24, as detailed in the report.

Further to the report, the Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director – Resources added that he considered the Council’s treasury management strategy and capital programme to be straightforward and safe strategies were in place, with credit to a well-run treasury function.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- Members were advised that the Council’s Weighted Average Maturity (WAM) was higher than the benchmark comparators from the Link Benchmarking group and the Council was achieving a higher investment returns due to the higher investment returns of lengthier investments made. Over the quarter, the Council’s treasury department had taken opportunities to secure several investments which had been made where counterparties were offering higher than the benchmark for the equivalent periods, and it was important to secure those rates when interest rates were expected to fall.
- If interest rates did not fall at the rate expected, borrowing and cost of living would remain expensive, but investment yields would increase.
- The target for inflation was still set at 2%, but it was unlikely that interest rates would ever fall to 0.1 and 0.25% again.
- Assurance was provided that the Council were able to be flexible and adapt to the changing environment.

- Thanks were recorded to the Treasury Department for their work during unprecedented times.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be endorsed and satisfaction be recorded for the overall performance reported as well as with assurances given by Officers to concerns as discussed; and
2. That the comments made be shared with the Executive Councillor for further consideration.

45 UPDATE ON IT SERVICES - PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Portfolio and Resources - IT, which invited the Board to consider an update on the IT project portfolio, as detailed in the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following point was recorded:

- It was suggested that the Council review the number of websites and other IT systems that were operating to assess the relevance and potential cost savings available. Officers advised that much of this work was ongoing and IT were working with service areas to ensure that software was up to date and unused software was removed. This included projects such as the streamlining of the Council's website and telephony system. Officers agreed to consider the number of websites operated by the Council as part of this project.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and satisfaction be recorded with the progressed made to date on IT commissioned projects.

46 PROPOSALS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Board to consider the next steps to identify and agree a potential topic for a scrutiny review to be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring that reviews were streamlined and focussed which would also mean they could be completed within the timescales proposed.

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- It was suggested that the Board receive regular updates on the progress being made by the Scrutiny Panels, as well as final reports being presented to the Board as well as the responsible scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the actions required identified in the report be supported and that Committees be requested to consider and put forward recommendations of topics suitable and relevant to an in-depth review;
2. That an item be scheduled for December 2023 to consider suggestions and allocate a topic to Scrutiny Panel A.

47 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

Consideration was given to an update from the Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Board to consider the recent work and planned work programme of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, as detailed at Appendix A to the report. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Theddlethorpe Geological Disposal Facility Working Group – Six-monthly Update scheduled to be considered on 24 October 2023 would no longer be a report for noting, but a discussion item.

Consideration was then given to an update from the Vice-Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee, which invited the Board to consider the recent work and planned work programme of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee as detailed at Appendix B to the report.

The Chairman of the of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee then reported on the recent work and planned work programme of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee as detailed at Appendix C to the report. It was noted that the next meeting of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee would take place on 27 November 2023, rather than 20 November as reported in the agenda.

During the discussion the following points were recorded:

- In relation to the work of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee, Members highlighted their concerns over the flow of sewage into rivers and the sea, and suggested that these concerns be raised with the Environment Agency on 27 November with reference to the use of their enforcement powers. It was explained that both the Environment Agency and Anglian Water were regular attenders at meetings of the Committee, and this matter would be fully discussed as mandated by the Council meeting on 15 September, with a view to focusing on the powers available to the County Council.
- In relation to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, it was clarified that the Sutton Bridge Place Making scheme, ‘place making’ referred to a holistic approach of creating quality places for people to live, work and develop their lives. This included creating infrastructure and public realm upgrades.

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- In relation to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee, the Bus Service Improvement Plan was commended and Members were assured that Bus Service Improvements were well promoted.

RESOLVED:

1. That thanks be recorded for the reports;
2. That satisfaction be recorded for the work undertaken and that the work programmes be endorsed.

48 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Board were invited to note its work programme, as set out on pages 99-116 of the agenda pack.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

49 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100A, of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

50 IT PC REPLACEMENT

Consideration was given to an exempt report on IT PC Replacement (Personal Computer Replacement) prior to a decision by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 3 October and 6 November 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations, as set out in the exempt report, be supported and comments shared with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT ahead of his decision.

The meeting closed at 11.21 am