



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577
Email democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk

Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 25th January, 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor R Ross (Chair)
Councillor L Stephenson (Vice Chair)
Councillor M Chatfield
Councillor K Corby
Councillor H Edwards
Councillor S Lambert
Councillor K Payne
Councillor S Harvey

APOLOGIES

Councillor T Carr
Councillor R Powell
Andreas Menzies Roman Catholic Diocese
Peter French Diocesan Deputy Director of Education,
Dioceses of Peterborough
Councillor D Ellison Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT

Councillor G Waller Leader of the Council
Councillor A Johnson Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for
Governance and Resources
Councillor P Browne Portfolio Holder for Planning, Property
and Economic Development
Councillor T Smith Portfolio Holder for Children and Families
Councillor C Wise Portfolio Holder for Transport,
Environment and Communities

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mark Andrews Chief Executive
Angela Wakefield Strategic Director of Law and Governance
(Monitoring Officer)
Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director of Children and Families
Kim Sorsky Strategic Director of Adults and Health
Kirsty Nutton Strategic Director of Resources (S151 Officer)
Penny Sharp Strategic Director of Places
Andrew Merry Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer)
Laura Daughtry Accountant
Jane Narey (Clerk) Scrutiny Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Carr and Councillor Powell but Councillor Harvey attended as Councillor Powell's representative. Apologies were also received from Peter French and Andreas Menzies, the Education Representatives and Councillor Ellison, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health.

2 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd November 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

The Chair noted for the record that Scrutiny Committee members had submitted written questions at the last meeting regarding Agenda Item 10 - Plan of Health Responsibilities and Key Decisions and that the questions and the responses to those questions had been published with the minutes of the meeting.

No response had been received regarding the question stated in the third point of Question 3 – *Where can Councillors find copies of (the Rutland Strategic Health Development Board's) reports since May 2022?* The Chair informed attendees that the Scrutiny Officer had contacted the relevant officers for a response and that the Q&A document would be updated accordingly and re-published.

3 ACTIONS ARISING

Action 1

2023/24 QUARTER 2 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST REPORT

The Chief Executive confirmed that he would provide a progress update on the transformation initiatives in the next Members' Briefing.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a progress update on the transformation initiatives had been included in the December Members' Briefing.

Action 2

Asset Review

Councillor Rosemary Powell, Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group to arrange a meeting for the Chief Executive to update the Task and Finish Group on the current situation and possibly identify any actions for the group moving forward.

Councillor Payne reported that a meeting had been held on the 4th January but that no actions could be identified at that time. It had been agreed to review the situation at the end of February regarding how the group could assist the Asset Review.

Action 3

Levelling Up Fund (LUF)

The Chief Executive confirmed that the process for the LUF was on track and that he would ask Councillor Gale Waller, Leader of the Council to send an update briefing to all Councillors.

The Chief Executive confirmed that an update had been produced and would be distributed week commencing the 29th January 2024.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion were received from Members.

8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION

No call-ins were received.

9 INTEGRATED BUDGET PLAN (IBP) AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - 2024/25 AND 2027/28

Report No. 16/2024 was received from Councillor Andrew Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Governance and Resources. During the conversation, the following points were noted:

- Scrutiny Committee members had submitted a number of detailed questions regarding the budget plan and the MTFS. Details of the questions plus the received responses would be published with the minutes – copy attached.
- Councillor Waller, Leader of the Council stated that, following the announcement from central government regarding an [extra £600 million funding for councils](#), further investigation was required by officers to understand the full implications of the funding.
- Costs involving a Section 19 inspection (under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010) and the provision of flooding expertise would be covered by the £46k (Page 63, Places - PP011).
- The budget included statements regarding factors that might ‘influence’ the figures stated within the report e.g. ‘colder winters and more severe frosts’ (Page 88, Highways – 4th bullet point).
- Paragraph 5.1 (Page 180, Investment Policy – Management of Risk) detailed the assumptions regarding grants/monies to be received and explained why funding was noted as increasing from £7,067K in 2024/25 to £9,618K in 2025/26 (Page 61, Total Budgets - General Grants).
- The new Integrated Budget Plan had and would continue to involve all Directors and Heads of Service in the budget setting process to help achieve the savings identified (Page 30, Strategic Financial Approach).
- Each saving proposal had been RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to show the level of ‘influence’ on the savings identified over the next four years. (Pages 65-67).
- Work would continue to move towards a more digitally expert Council in the provision of online services as Rutland’s population changed and became more IT proficient.
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council had a statutory responsibility regarding children/young people with a special educational need

and disability (SEND) but needed to ensure that it was providing a correct and cost-effective service that was beneficial to service users. Work at Uppingham Community College, Edith Weston Academy and Oakham Primary School would result in fewer children attending out-of-county education so reducing the costs involved in the provision of SEND transport.

- The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that the savings identified (Page 66, Places – PS012) included other SEND factors. These related to the 3 interlinked and interdependent programmes which contributed to the overall costings for SEND provision and so the decrease in SEND transport costs:
 1. SEND Change Programme – dealt with the long-term future of SEND provision nationally and locally.
 2. Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme – aimed to decrease the deficit of the High Needs Block funding.
 3. SEND Capital Programme – provided investment in alternative provision in Rutland that met individual needs whilst providing a uniform offer.

- The Chief Executive confirmed that the £1.2 million LUF funding was to be used to improve all services at the Rutland Memorial Hospital (RMH) site. The original business case for an enhanced procedure suite at the RMH site had been reviewed by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB) and an updated business case was expected at the end of February 2024. This followed further investigations by the LLR ICB into the provision of same day care and urgent care access at RMH.
- Members were informed that demand changes for residential care had been included in the budget and that the RAG ratings detailed on the Savings Proposals (Page 65) would be reviewed and amended accordingly if required.
- Members queried if any money had been identified within the budget relating to climate emergency and the Chief Executive confirmed that there was a one-off revenue investment included in the budget which would look at a local area energy plan. The local area energy plan would look at possible capital investment via grant schemes and external funding, to provide systems that would be right for Rutland.
- Members queried what would happen with the deficit in the High Needs Block once central government funding ceased in 2026. The Leader of the Council confirmed that this was a national issue but work was ongoing to build in provision to support the funding including the annual transfer of 0.5% funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to the High Needs Block as approved by the Rutland Schools' Forum. The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that Rutland currently had 302 children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council's priorities had been identified but the budget had to focus on what could be spent from the reduced funding.
- Members stated that there was a need for to ensure that there were details behind the broad headlines including what these details would look like when they were put into practice and what effect they would have on services.
- Members queried what support was being provided following the removal of the Direct Carer's Grant. Kim Sorsky, Strategic Director of Adults and Health stated that the carer's offer was currently being reviewed so that more resources and extra funding could be identified to provide a better offer of support to carers.
- Members noted that the budget for 2024/25 did not recognise the risk of any possible additional costs associated with the Section 19 inspection (Flood and

Water Management Act 2010) or the scrutiny review. Members proposed that the Chair write a report for presentation to Cabinet highlighting the budget areas discussed by the Scrutiny Committee and the possible 'influence' any additional costs for the Section 19 inspection/ scrutiny review may have on the budget figures for 2025/26.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the Integrated Budget Plan (IBP) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – 2024/25 to 2027/28, as set out in Report No. 04/2024.
- b) **PROVIDED** comments and views for Cabinet to consider in the finalisation of the budget on the 13th February 2024.
- c) **AGREED** that the Chair would write/present a report to Cabinet on the 13th February 2024 recommending that Cabinet note the budget areas discussed by the Scrutiny Committee including the possible 'influence' any additional costs for the Section 19 inspection/scrutiny review may have on the budget figures for 2025/26.

10 REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN

The work plan and the list of proposed items were reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- At the Special Council meeting held on the 16th January, Council had agreed to request that the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee help investigate the flooding issues recently experienced by the Rutland community. The Committee, guided by the Council's debate, would assist the investigation and make recommendations to Cabinet and Council regarding the role of Council as Local Lead Flood Authority. The Chair confirmed that the matter stood up to the PAPER test as it was a matter of public interest, affected a number of Rutland residents and that the Scrutiny Committee would have the ability to have an impact on the issue.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **AGREED** to the Council's request for the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assist in the investigation of the flooding issues.

11 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 8th February 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

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