

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 9 March 2016 at 10:00 am in the Elisabeth Room, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Mary Evans (Chairman), John Field (Vice Chairman), Sarah Adams, Trevor Beckwith, Peter Beer, Kathy Bole, Jessica Fleming, David Hudson, Len Jacklin, David Ritchie.

Supporting officers present: Theresa Harden (Business Manager, Democratic Services) and Linda Pattle (Democratic Services Officer).

51. Public Participation Session

There were no applications to speak in the Public Participation Session.

52. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Sandra Gage (substituted by Councillor Sarah Adams) and Councillor Jane Storey.

53. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

54. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

55. Scrutiny Priorities Workshop

The Committee considered a report at Agenda Item 5, summarising scrutiny development activities which had taken place in the previous nine months and setting the background for a workshop session.

Officers gave presentations as follows:

The County Council's approach to consultations

Simon Higgins, Head of Strategic Communications and Customer Service
Julian Brown, Consultation and Engagement Manager, Resource Management

Progress towards digitalisation and website improvement

Simon Higgins, Head of Strategic Communications and Customer Service
Liz Moss, Digital Transformation Manager, Resource Management
Mark Burgess, Senior Customer Experience Manager, Resource Management
Gareth Prosser, Digital Customer Experience Manager, Resource Management

The County Council's IT Strategy

Paul Doe, Chief Technology Officer, Resource Management

Progress with Supporting Lives Connecting Communities

John Lewis, Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services
Sharon Miller, Head of Service Transformation, Adult and Community Services

The use of Assistive Technology in helping people to remain independent

John Lewis, Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services
Jayne Harvey, Head of Strategic Commissioning (East), Adult and Community Services

Fire Service collaboration with other emergency services

Mark Hardingham, Chief Fire Officer
Mark Sanderson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Dave Pedersen, Group Commander, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

For each of the above topics, the officers gave a presentation and answered members' questions. A copy of the presentations the Committee received is available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181b7160e>

Members and officers broke into discussions groups to consider the following:

- a. What, if any, should scrutiny's role be to add value to this work?
- b. What was the focused problem/issue scrutiny should seek to address?
- c. How would scrutiny demonstrate the impact it had made?
- d. What were the key questions?
- e. Who should be involved?
- f. When and how should scrutiny take place?

The outcomes from the table discussions were used to inform the development of the Committee's forward work programme. (Agenda Item 7 – Minute No. 57 below refers.)

The meeting adjourned for lunch from 12:50 to 1:30 pm.

56. Information Bulletin

The Committee received an Information Bulletin at Agenda Item 6. An addendum to the Information Bulletin was circulated at the meeting and subsequently published on the Council's website.

57. Key Decision Forward Plan and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

At Agenda Item 7 the Committee considered the Key Decision Forward Plan and the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

Decision: The Committee agreed:

- a) To note Councillor Jacklin's concern as to whether the correct procedures had been followed in spending the Department for Transport funding for the Lowestoft Links project and to suggest this was more appropriately a matter for the attention of the Audit Committee.
- b) To suggest the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee might wish to consider scrutinising the services offered by Schools Choice.

- c) To seek further information on the operation of “Sensing Change”, as a wholly owned company of the County Council.
- d) That at its meeting on 4 May 2016 the Committee would scrutinise Fire Service collaboration with other emergency services, if this date was not considered to be too soon in relation to the timing of the developments taking place.
- e) That future topics for scrutiny should include:
 - the County Council’s approach to Consultation;
 - the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, including what difference the Capital Investment Fund was making in Suffolk (June 2016);
 - the operation of the library service (June 2016);
 - the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy (provisionally July 2016)
 - progress with the Supporting Lives Connecting Communities project (provisionally September 2016);
 - how well the County Council’s approach to digitalisation and web-site improvement was serving the Suffolk population;
 - revisiting progress with devolution (possibly a joint scrutiny exercise).

Reason for decision:

- a) Members considered that the Audit Committee would be better placed than the Scrutiny Committee to consider whether the Department for Transport funding for the Lowestoft Links Project had been spent in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.
- b) and c) The Committee received information updates from Members with Special Responsibility. The Chairman verbally reported on behalf of the Member with Special Responsibility for Business Development, and suggested the Committee might wish to look at Sensing Change (a wholly owned company of the County Council providing services to people with sensory difficulties) and Schools Choice. It was noted that Schools Choice fell under the remit of the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee.
- d) and e) The Committee considered that the provisional timetable outlined in (d) and (e) above reflected members’ opinions of the relative need to scrutinise the topics, bearing in mind the presentations from officers and the workshop discussions which had taken place.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

58. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3:30 pm.

Chairman

