

Minutes of the SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY  
27 FEBRUARY 2019 at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Brackenbury (Chair)  
Councillors Bint, R Bradburn, Brown, Crooks, Ferrans, A Geary,  
D Hopkins, Jenkins, Miles, Morla, Patey-Smith, Wallis, C Wilson and  
K Wilson

**Officer:** S Gonsalves (Director of Policy, Insight and Communications) and  
S Heap (Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager)

**Apologies:** Councillors Marklew and Walker

**Also Present:** Councillor Legg (Cabinet member for Customer Services)

**SM36 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None disclosed.

**SM37 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 21 November 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**SM38 CONSULTATIONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP - RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee considered the responses from the Cabinet member for Customer Services) to the recommendations of the Consultations Task and Finish Group.

The Cabinet member specifically referred to the recommendation that the Council should appoint an officer who was a consultation expert to advise upon and oversee the numerous consultations undertaken by the Council. The Cabinet member was of the view that such an appointment was unnecessary as advice was already available from the Communications Team, which would also provide training as required, and the service specialist was probably best placed to lead the consultation due to their knowledge of the topic.

With regard to the recommendation relating to how the Development Control Service communicated with its stakeholders, the Cabinet member recognised that further work was required and that the use of social media was one of the options to be considered.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a quarterly report on the outcome of consultations.

The Committee made a number of comments which included that:

- (a) respondents to consultations deserved a proper response which showed that account had been taken of their comments, 'noted' was not a satisfactory response;
- (b) it was important that the success and quality of a particular consultation was measured so that lessons could be learnt;
- (c) a stage should be built into consultations which allowed potential respondents to discuss any issues with stakeholders and service experts before the consultation was officially released;
- (d) the Development Control Service was consulting on the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which could potentially address the recommendation from the Task and Finish Group relating to how the Service communicated with its stakeholders;
- (e) there needed to be alternative ways for responses to be submitted, other than just on-line;
- (f) the quarterly report suggested by the Cabinet member could be included as part of the corporate performance monitoring arrangements;
- (g) the appointment of a consultation professional was essential to improving the quality of the consultations, particularly making them clearer and easier to understand; and
- (h) the Executive Forward Plan was an essential tool for scrutiny to identify potential consultations it might want to respond to and also to identify items for pre-decision scrutiny, however the Forward Plan did not generally project far enough into the future to allow this.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the Committee's Planning Group be requested to consider including in the Work Programme for the Scrutiny Management Committee a progress report after six months on the implementation of the measures suggested by the Cabinet member for Customer Services in his response to the recommendations from the Task and finish Group.
2. That the Leader of the Council be requested to take measures to ensure that his Executive Forward Plan becomes a more forward looking document to help the Management Committee to identify potential items for pre-scrutiny.
3. That the Development Control Committee be recommended to encourage Developers, as part of the pre-application stage of submitting a planning application, to consult with parish and town councils.

4. That the Director of Policy, Insight and Communications be requested to consider including, as part of the corporate performance monitoring, an indicator which addresses the outcomes from consultations and the extent to which responses have changed the ultimate decision.
5. That the Cabinet member for Customer Services be requested to review with officer colleagues the appointment of an officer with overall responsibility for consultations.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.00 PM

DRAFT