

MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2025

Present: Councillor S Lambeth (Chair)

Councillors C Beck, D Bigby, K Horn, A Morley, S Sheahan and J Windram

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mrs A Crouch, Ms J McGarry, Panter and Mr P Stone

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors M Ball, M Burke and R Morris.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

4. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025.

It was moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor S Lambeth and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

5. COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN - PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 2024/25

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the report to Members.

Comments were made on the presentation of the data within the report and a concern regarding lack of clarity due to the type of wording used, in some key performances areas it seemed that the Council was failing. It was felt that the format could be misleading and did not provide the full picture of the progress. After a full discussion, it was put to the vote and formally recommended that Cabinet amend the presentation of the performance data as detailed in the recommendations below.

In relation to the transformation projects, it was acknowledged that the parking review had been completed with no changes implemented. Due to the amount of officer time spent on the project, it was suggested that a review be undertaken to understand the lessons learned to avoid the misuse of funds and officer time in the future. This was noted by the Strategic Director of Resources. Following further questions regarding the transformation projects and the request for more clarity, Members were informed that as the projects progressed into the rest of the financial year, more information would be available in future reports.

A discussion was had on the Clean and Green Key Performance Indicators and concerns were raised that the benchmarking and target setting were not yet completed. Although it was explained that the delay was due to a piece of work yet to be undertaken before

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Cabinet could set a target date, and that more information would be available when a report was brought to Committee in November, some Members felt that the matter needed addressing urgently as the Council needed clear annual targets. It was put to the vote and formally recommended that Cabinet undertake the benchmarking and target setting in relation to Key Performance Indicator 13 (we will aim to be carbon zero by 2030 and as a district by 2050) as soon as possible.

A Member felt that Key Performance Indicator 14 (We will increase the biodiversity of our district), was quoted incorrectly in the report as it seemed the wrong target was being measured, it was suggested that officers investigate.

It was highlighted by a Member that there was no reference within the report to Local Government Reorganisation which was currently underway. The Strategic Director of Resources explained that work had begun, and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy would be focused on the next two to three years rather than five years. It was also confirmed that a report regarding the proposals to become a debt free council that was made at the full council meeting earlier in the month by the administration, would be brought to the Committee in September.

Several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:

- a) To ensure clarity of the information being presented, consider the following amendments to the performance report:
 - i) Amend the labels connected to the red and green progress of KPI's in the bar charts from 'complete' and 'not complete' to 'compliant with KPI's' and 'not compliant with KPI's'
 - ii) Amend the format of the progress of KPI information, to make it easier to understand, including moving away from stacked bar graphs and providing details alongside statements.
- b) In relation to KPI 13 (we will aim to be carbon zero by 2030 and as a district by 2050), the benchmarking and target setting be completed as soon as possible.

6. 2024/25 Q3 GENERAL FUND FINANCE UPDATE

The Strategic Director of Finance presented the report to Members.

A discussion was had in relation to the interest earned on the Housing Revenue Account, it was suggested that it be used to purchase new homes rather than left in a bank account. The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed it was about the balance of returns, however, the use of the funds would be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

It was also commented that a lot of the debt on the General Fund was as a result of the leisure centre build, it was felt that the cost should be spread across a longer timeframe rather than attempting to clear the debt as quickly as possible. In response to a further question regarding Council debt, the Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that there was no requirement to clear any debt prior to Local Government Reorganisation but that there was still lots of discussions to be had on the matter moving forward.

During discussion, a point was raised around the timescales of receiving the finance update as it was six months after the end of quarter three and therefore, to some Members, felt irrelevant. It was put to the vote and formally recommended to Cabinet that

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the financial updates were received as close to the end of the quarter as possible, preferably prior to Cabinet.

Several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

In response to a question requesting the costs around the old council offices, the Strategic Director of Resources agreed to provide the information outside of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:

Consider changing the process of finance monitoring so that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee can scrutinise the information closer to the end of each quarter with the Committee's preference being prior to consideration by cabinet.

7. CUSTOMER SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director of Finance presented the report to Members.

During discussion, several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

Members were pleased with the progress made and welcomed the benchmarking data. Some concerns were raised in relation to avoidable calls and the Customer Services Team Manager shared those concerns, and explained the data was mainly relating to people calling back. It was something that the team were working on improving.

Members were unhappy to see the effect the job had on some team members mental health and in response it was confirmed that there were mental health first aiders available to staff.

A comment was made on the use of stacked bar graphs, as it was felt it was hard to see the comparisons detailed.

The Portfolio Holder referred to a visit he made to Customer Services recently along with Councillor C Beck, he confirmed that it was very interesting and recommended other Members take the opportunity to do the same if possible.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their comments.

8. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director of Finance presented the report to Members.

Members were pleased with the progress made in the last 12 months and it was commented that it would be good to see an increase in complaints moving forward as it indicated residents trusted the Council enough to make a complaint. The comments were echoed by the Portfolio Holder.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their comments.

9. PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK FOLLOW UP

The Strategic Director of Finance presented the report to Members.

Several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

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The Chair thanked the Committee for their comments.

10. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director of Communities introduced the report to Members and then handed over to the Chair to present it.

In relation to the role of scrutiny as detailed in the report and the subject matters the committees could consider, it was highlighted that carbon zero was not listed. It was suggested that it be added. It was confirmed that the list was taken from the Constitution and was not exhaustive, therefore it could be included. It was proposed that the Governance Working Group, who were currently undertaking the annual review of the constitution, be requested to make the change.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The Governance Working Group be requested to include the addition of carbon zero in the subject matter list for scrutiny included in the scrutiny terms of reference as part of the annual review.
- b) Authority be delegated to the Scrutiny Committee Chairs to make any final amendments to the report following consideration by both Scrutiny Committees prior to consideration by Council.

11. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the future work programme.

Following concerns raised by a Member, the Strategic Director of Communities confirmed that although the carbon zero update report would be considered by the Committee later in the year, the information within it would be up to date.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm