

## MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON

4 September 2018

7.30 - 9.05 pm

### PRESENT

#### Committee Members

Councillor Bob Davis (Chair)

Councillor David Carter (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Simon Carter

Councillor Joel Charles

Councillor Tony Edwards

Councillor Shona Johnson

Councillor Edna Stevens

Councillor Chris Vince

Councillor Phil Waite substitute for Councillor Maggie Hulcoop

#### Officers

Donna Beechener, Revenues and Benefits Manager

Cara Coxhead, Area Housing Manager

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Managing Director

Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

#### Other Attendees

Dave Cope, District Operations Manager for Essex DWP

### 12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maggie Hulcoop. Councillor Phil Waite was in attendance as her substitute.

*The Chair announced that items 9 and 10 would be considered before Item 8.*

### 13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 14. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 15. MATTERS ARISING

None.

16. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

17. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

18. **RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

19. **REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT - SCOPING REPORT**

Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing, presented a scoping report for the Review of the Impact of Permitted Development.

The Committee agreed that the possibility of using Article 4 Directions should be considered as part of the review. It was also agreed that the review should look at the protocols surrounding the transfer of people on a housing needs register into other council areas, and whether these protocols needed strengthening.

**RESOLVED** that the scope of the review of the Impact of Permitted Development, as set out in the report, was agreed subject to the addition of the following:

- A** Explore the possibility of using Article 4 Directions to limit permitted development.
- B** Review the protocols surrounding the transfer of people on housing needs registers into other council areas, and whether these protocols needed strengthening.

20. **REVIEW OF POLICING IN THE TOWN - SCOPING REPORT**

Jane Greer presented a scoping report for a review of policing in the town. The Committee agreed to invite Nick Downing, Assistant Chief Constable – Essex Police, the Police Federation, the Police Chiefs Association, and the Police and Crime Commissioner to participate in the review.

**RESOLVED** that the scope of the review of policing in the town, as set out in the report, was agreed subject to the following:

- A** The addition of Nick Downing, Assistant Chief Constable – Essex Police, the Police Federation, the Police Chiefs Association, and the Police and Crime Commissioner to the list of stakeholders to be invited to participate in the review.

21. **REVIEW OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN HARLOW - UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received an update report on the review of Universal Credit in Harlow. The Chair asked Dave Cope, the District Operations Manager for Essex DWP to give an overview of how Universal Credit (UC) was being implemented, as well as how the DWP was dealing with any identified issues. Councillors were then invited to ask questions.

The Committee considered the identified issues and agreed that Cabinet should be asked to note the delays in payments being made to housing providers as well as the increase in the level of rent arrears.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommended to Cabinet that:

**A** It notes the continued operational issues that the transition to Universal Credit is having for the Council and its services during the first 12 months of the live scheme in Harlow and in particular:

- i) Delays in payments being made to housing providers.
- ii) The increased level of rent arrears.

22. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report summarising its work plan for 2018/19.

The Chair informed the Committee that the West Essex CCG had declined an invitation to attend the meeting in October to participate in the Review of the Closure of Osler House. The Committee expressed their disappointment and asked that a letter was written by the Managing Director to the CCG expressing this. It was agreed that the Osler House Action Group would still be invited to the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the work plan be noted.

23. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

24. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE