
Meeting	Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	10 March 2025
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Merrett (Vice-Chair), B Burton, Coles, Healey, Melly, D Myers, Rose, Rowley, Waller, Widdowson, Vassie (Substitute) and Whitcroft (Substitute)
In Attendance (for Item 5, Review of Scrutiny Function)	Councillors Douglas (Leader) and Kilbane (Deputy Leader) Councillors J Burton (Chair, Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee) and Clarke, (Vice-Chair, Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee)
Officers Present	Lindsay Tomlinson, Head of Democratic Governance Debbie Mitchell, Director of Finance Ian Cunningham, Head of Business Intelligence

52. Apologies for Absence (5.34 pm)

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Ayre and Taylor, they were substituted by Cllrs Vassie and Whitcroft respectively.

53. Declarations of Interest (5.34 pm)

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

None were declared.

54. Minutes (5.34 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.

55. Public Participation (5.35 pm)

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Gwen Swinburn, a local resident, commented on Item 5, the Scrutiny Review. She made several suggestions relating to the Forward Plan, the number of scrutiny committees needed and the topics that should be covered.

Flick Williams, also a local resident, spoke remotely via Zoom in relation to Item 5. She welcomed more training for members and a dedicated scrutiny officer but raised concerns regarding the reduction to the number of meetings, noting a lost opportunity for residents to share lived experiences. She also questioned the timescales relating to the decision-making process on the recommendations and action plan.

56. Review of the Scrutiny Function (5.41 pm)

The Head of Democratic Governance presented the proposed action plan to support the recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in relation to the recently completed review of the scrutiny function. The suggestions from Committee Members would be presented to the next meeting of the Executive, alongside the review recommendations and action plan.

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council also attended the meeting to hear Member contributions. They thanked Members for their input into both the review and the action plan.

Following consideration of each action point during which Members sought clarification from Officers and Executive Members and offered their suggestions, a list was made of agreed changes. Members were broadly in support of all the action points, with the exception of action 3 which proposed to limit the use of substitutions to named individuals only. In relation to action 8, there was no consensus as to the number of committees, only that there should be a reduction to the current four scrutiny committees, and that fewer members should sit on the committees.

[7.10-7.13 pm, Cllr Whitcroft left the meeting, 7.15–7.17 pm, Cllr B Burton left the meeting, 7.16-7.18 pm, Cllr Melly left the meeting].

Resolved:

- i. That the action plan be agreed, with the exception of action 3 which related to the use of named substitutes.
- ii. That the suggestions put forward by the Committee be published the following day as a supplement to the 11 March Executive agenda.

Reason: To ensure scrutiny Members contribution to pre-decision scrutiny of the scrutiny review.

57. Finance and Performance Monitor 3, 2024/25 (7.35 pm)

The Director of Finance presented her report, noting that although the financial position was much improved, there remained a forecast overspend and therefore work continued in order to ensure the Council's financial resilience.

Members noted improvements in performance and asked a range questions covering the council wide financial analysis, SEND funding, benchmarking, sickness data, and housing benefit performance.

The DoF was joined by the Head of Business Intelligence in responding to Member questions, reporting that table 1 included the library savings, it did not include the waste savings for 25/26.

SEND expenditure was covered by the dedicated schools grant (DSG) and sat outside the general fund, the statutory override was a national decision and was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. CYC was in receipt of safety valve funding to reduce the high needs deficit which, although there was no guarantee, should be balanced within two years.

Officers used benchmarks where such data was available, and they would look for further benchmarking data where possible. The information contained in the report used the last three data points and a mathematical formula was used for the calculations. LG Inform was used by officers and could be used by Members and residents, officers would share information on how to do this on the open data platform and share with the Committee.

Sickness data was available to the Corporate Management Team and Managers. Sickness levels had risen last quarter, and further analysis would be brought forward in the next report.

The reported housing benefit performance related to Department of Work and Pensions performance, not the Council's.

Resolved: That the report and the work identifying savings needed to fully mitigate the forecast overspend be noted.

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

[7.41-7.44 pm, Cllr Widdowson left the meeting]

58. Council Motions (7.53 pm)

Members considered the Motions report which had been updated and brought back to the Committee. A general discussion took place on the process for Motions, and it was reported by officers that the Democratic Services Team had recently been tasked with improving motion tracking.

Resolved: That the report be noted, and the Chair and Vice-Chair would determine which Motions could be closed.

Reason: To ensure that processes for monitoring and implementing approved Council motion resolutions remain sufficiently robust.

59. Work Plan (8.19 pm)

Members considered the work plan for the committee and the overview work plan for the four scrutiny committees.

Resolved: That the work plans be noted.

Reason: To ensure an overview of the scrutiny work programme.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 8.25 pm].