

Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

**Wednesday, 23 June 2021 at 6.00 pm
at Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor L Giles (Chair);
Councillors E M Giles, Mabena, Moore and A Shackleton.

In attendance: Councillors Abrahams, Bhullar, Chambers and Gavan.

Officers: David Stevens (Chief Executive), Neil Cox (Director – Business Strategy and Change), Lesley Hagger (Director – Children’s Services), Rebecca Maher (Interim S151 Officer and Head of Finance), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director HR), Surjit Tour (Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Elaine Newsome (Service Manager - Democracy) and Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager).

1 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Anandou.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.



3 Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider, however the Chair confirmed that a report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport would be considered at a future meeting.

4 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 are approved as a correct record.

5 Scrutiny Annual Report 2019 - 2021

The Scrutiny Management Board considered a draft scrutiny annual report which outlined work undertaken by Sandwell Council's scrutiny function in the 2019 -2021 municipal years. The report highlighted a number of activities and outcomes that contributed to the Sandwell Vision 2030 and the objectives of the Corporate Plan, demonstrating the breadth of topics considered and the different ways of working that had been employed to carry out the scrutiny function.

It was noted that there had been changes to members involved with the scrutiny function since and the Scrutiny Management Board placed on record its thanks to the hard work and dedication shown by the councillors who had chaired and sat on Scrutiny Boards between 2019 - 2021 that were not reappointed for this municipal year.

<p>Resolved that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019 -2021 be approved for submission to Council in July 2021.</p>

6 Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme 2021-22

The Scrutiny Management Board received an overview from Directors of key areas of work within their directorates that were currently underway or were planned during 2021-22.

The Scrutiny Management Board noted that financial reports, including quarterly monitoring reports and business planning, would continue to be submitted at key points throughout the year.

Members discussed potential topics for consideration by the Scrutiny Management Board and agreed a work programme.

It was now proposed to consider:-

- Reasons for budget shortfall and the use of reserves;
- The health and wellbeing of the workforce linked to productivity and engagement – this would be scoped further for consideration by the Board;
- Portal development and what communication is being undertaken with the public on how to access digital platforms for council services linked with balancing the finance needed to invest in a new digital infrastructure and how the Council will measure the return on current communication platforms.

Resolved that the following topics be included in the work programme for the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for the 2021-22 municipal year:-

July

Financial Outturn 2020/21 including reasons for variances against budget for each directorate

September

Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1;
Engagement and outcomes of refresh of Corporate Plan and consideration of draft plan

October

Digital platforms for council services linked with balancing the finance needed to invest in a new digital infrastructure and how the Council will measure the return on current communication platforms;

November

Health and wellbeing of the workforce linked to productivity and engagement;

December

Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2;

January

Topic to be agreed.

February

Budget 2022-23/Directorate Business Plans;

March

Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3.

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Scrutiny Boards Work Programme 2021-22

The Scrutiny Management Board considered the draft work programmes submitted by the Scrutiny Boards. These set out the topics that each Board had identified for review during the 2021-22 municipal year. It was acknowledged that prioritisation work would continue to determine when topics would be scheduled to ensure they were timely and allowed for effective scrutiny to take place.

Resolved that the work programme for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board and the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board for 2020-21 be approved.

Meeting ended at 6.52 pm

Contact: Democratic Services
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