

## **MINUTES**

### **FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6 JUNE 2023**

#### **Present:**

|                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Councillor Freedman (Chair) | Councillor A Williams          |
| Councillor Capozzi          | Councillor Hannell             |
| Councillor Gale             | Councillor Pound               |
| Councillor Reynolds         | Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair) |
| Councillor Santamaria       | Councillor Cox                 |
| Councillor Adeleke          |                                |

#### **Officers:**

Catherine Silva Donayre (Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial)  
Aidan Wilkie (Strategic Director, People and Transformation)  
Nigel Howcutt (Chief Finance Officer)  
Ben Hosier (Head of Commercial Development)  
Matt Brookes (Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services)  
Matt Rawdon (Assistant Director, People)  
Shaj Choudhury (Head of Transformation)  
Chris Baker (Head of Revenues, Benefits and Fraud)  
Kelvin Soley (Head of Communication)  
Yvonne Salvin (Head of Digital)  
Trudi Angel (Democratic Support Officer)

#### **Also in attendance:**

Councillor Carole Weston (Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation)  
Councillor Sally Symington (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial)

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

#### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Guest and S Hobson.

#### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**5**                    **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None.

**6**                    **ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

On the action regarding green bin subscriptions, the Chair suggested that they needed to evaluate the communications that had taken place as well as looking at questions and comments that were raised following the launch to assess if there were any further lessons learned. The Chair confirmed that the action could be closed though should be considered going forward.

On the action regarding the breakdown of staff turnover, the Chair noted that the provided format was not easy to read and it was suggested that the amount of people in each team at the beginning of the period be noted to provide further context.

It was confirmed that all other actions were closed.

ACTION: Staff turnover table to be updated to include amount of people in each team at the start of the period.

**7**                    **STRATEGIC ASSET REVIEW**

C Silva Donayre opened the item, noting that the review is to ensure that the Council is making the most effective use of its assets to support the Council's wider strategic objectives as well as its commercial strategy.

D Barrett presented the update, advising that the intention of the review is to better understand the potential that the assets have to support the Council's objectives around place and bringing forward housing and commercial opportunities that may exist. Subject to the Committee's comments and support, D Barrett confirmed that they would like to take the review to Cabinet in June. The proposal is for the Committee to consider both the review and associated funding to support the project, which is being run by a strategic asset group that has attendance for the senior leadership team.

D Barrett noted the key objectives of the project, including housing delivery, focus on regeneration activities in the town centre and neighbourhood areas, and look at future income streams. Work has been split across 3 work streams and each will require external consultant support. The 3 work streams are as follows:

- High-level review of assets

- Detailed review of each asset class
- Assessment of options to deliver work not covered by the programme

D Barrett advised that the work is costed at just over £500k, split between the HRA and General Fund, and that this work can only be partially funded at present. It is therefore proposed that the shortfall of around £211k be funded by reserves. The project will also require interim internal resource, which has been set out in the report.

Cllr Hannell commented on affordable housing and asked how much of this will be social housing, noting that the average price of a terraced house in Hemel Hempstead is currently £525,668 and a flat is currently £245,935, according to Zoopla. Cllr Hannell queried the classification of the term 'affordable'. D Barrett advised that, outside of the project, there is a current programme being delivered under the business plan for new homes, all of which are being built for social rent. This programme continues at pace with 10 construction sites open and the ambition is to bring in further social housing, with the project highlighting what housing is required. D Barrett suggested that they will look at affordable housing alongside potential private housing, though this will be confirmed by the project. A new team within the Council was recently set up to work closely with planning colleagues and this includes working with developers to bring forward more affordable housing, possibly at social rent levels.

Cllr Hannell noted the ambition of the scheme and asked if there were concerns amongst the new administration that the projected rise of Hemel Hempstead's population by 50% over the next 30 years would adversely impact the Liberal Democrats' Green Recovery Plan to save the British countryside as the majority of the new housing would be built on greenbelt land. The Chair commented that much of the work on the current report package did go through the prior administration and therefore change of policy or direction will not affect the reports. Cllr Sally Symington advised that the Local Plan is yet to be developed and that the item is not within the portfolio being discussed. Cllr Sally Symington suggested that the question therefore be taken to the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Gale asked for further detail on why the strategic asset review is taking place now. D Barrett advised that the Council needs to identify opportunities to generate income to support its ambitions and to address the need for housing in the borough. The project will help identify the next wave of pipeline opportunities to bring forward new houses.

Cllr Gale commented that new housing has been required for some time and asked why the project was being reviewed now. D Barrett explained that the Council started building new homes around 6-7 years ago with some ready-to-go sites and a pipeline was identified for the first 5 years to bring in over 300 new homes. This pipeline will

be complete in the next 2 years and therefore the intention is to prepare for the next wave. It was noted that parts of this work have already been planned and have been included in identified work plans, which is why part of the funding is already in place.

A question was raised regarding interim support and it was asked why this is a part-time role. It was stated that this role is to support the overarching strategic asset review and that consultants and other members of staff will also be involved. It was stated that it was felt a part-time role over 6 months would be most suitable.

Cllr Capozzi noted that the review would provide information to identify how much housing could be social rent, affordable rent and market rent and asked if the team would be given the Council's aspirations in terms of volumes for each of these categories to help inform their work. Cllr Capozzi suggested that the wording of 'opportunities for development or repurposing assets to support the Council's objectives should be considered' should be changed to 'must be considered as a priority' as redevelopment and repurposing would be key to avoiding building on greenbelt land. D Barrett agreed, noting that the first task will be to understand where the Council can build and that will then look at what they can viably deliver in terms of tenure.

Cllr Capozzi suggested that if tenure is considered later then this will require further review to ensure that it is appropriate for the site, stating that instead they could send out teams to consider what sites would be appropriate for each tenure. Cllr Capozzi remarked that the current contingency is too low and will likely increase. C Silva Donayre noted that work is happening in parallel to develop the pipeline and assess the demands for different types of housing that may be required. It was noted that within the second workstream, there are a number of reviews into the various portfolios, and the work is the first phase of informing future planning to make best use of the Council's assets to support its ambitions.

Cllr Capozzi referred to item 5 of the report, financial and value for money implications, and the one-off reduction to the 2023-24 HRA revenue contribution to capital, and asked if this means the capital budget will not receive £96k to deliver the project. Cllr Capozzi queried what would therefore not be delivered to the capital programme because of this. N Howcutt advised that there is an annual revenue contribution to capital of around £3m to fund future capital work, some of which are approved and others that are within the pipeline. N Howcutt explained that they are using funds as they would've done, though they will be spending them in the first year rather than putting them in reserves to use in future years.

The Chair commented that a large portfolio of assets fall under the review, though there are a number of items not within this, and suggested that the implication that it covers all the Council's property assets is incorrect. The Chair asked if they are looking at property assets that they possibly don't have a value on and suggested that they highlight the items that aren't covered by the review.

The Chair suggested that the strategic asset review may duplicate the work covered by previous stock condition surveys and asked if the costs of this have taken this into account. C Silva Donayre confirmed that they will not repeat any stock condition surveys that have already been completed and they will help inform the reviews, particularly with the garage portfolio and housing review.

Cllr Gale commented on the third work stream and asked if officers could expand on the delivery vehicles mentioned. D Barrett advised that the project is to explore all opportunities within the marketplace and that they are aware of partnership arrangements that may exist where they would work with another party to bring in skills to deliver a joint venture project. D Barrett noted that they would also look at delivery vehicles such as having a wholly owned housing company and that all opportunities will be put into a report to assess which may be best for the programme that comes forward. C Silva Donayre added that it is a short focused piece of work to ensure there is a robust basis for future decisions. Cllr Gale stated that it would be useful to have this included in future reports.

The Committee approved the proposal to take the review to Cabinet, subject to highlighting the areas not included by the review. It was confirmed that the updated report would be available to view 5 days before it goes to Cabinet.

## **8 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL**

The Chair noted that new members had raised questions regarding terms of reference and phrases used within the report and explained that key terms can be defined at the beginning of the report.

Cllr Gale commented on the use of 'slippage' and 'pressure' within the report and asked if these could be explained further. N Howcutt explained that slippage refers to the timing of when money is spent and financial pressure is when a budget is under pressure due to an underspend or expected overspend.

B Hosier presented the report on commercial development, noting that this includes procurement, parking, the leisure contract, garages and the commercial programme. The report was taken as read and members were invited to raise questions regarding the report.

Cllr Santamaria commented on the temporary agency staff costs, noting that these appear to be significant and asked if any actions are being taken to reduce dependency of agency staff and increase employment of local people. M Rawdon noted the challenges within the hiring market and advised that they have set up a new agency framework where agencies will bid for work where agency staff are required and it is hoped that the Council will get a better mark-up rate rather than going direct to agencies. M Rawdon added that there is work underway to address

how individuals are recruited, including the market forces policy that looks at areas where the Council struggles to recruit and retain staff to look at how to address concerns. M Rawdon noted that they will look to continue careers fairs and work with schools and careers advisors to help encourage the pipeline.

Cllr Santamaria asked how DBC compares to other councils in terms of their dependence on agency staff. M Rawdon stated that he was unsure though he could look into this further, though he would expect a similar picture across Hertfordshire.

The Chair asked B Hosier what the greatest challenge is at present. B Hosier stated that the main challenges are recruitment and the economy, noting that he is looking to generate income through garages and parking services, and that it is challenging to achieve these targets.

Cllr Capozzi commented on the garage service and asked how much of unused stock is due to it being unfit for use or people no longer having an interest in using these sites. B Hosier explained that the stock condition survey identified the number of garages not currently being used, noting that there are a number of areas where there are an excess of sites and other areas within the borough have waiting lists. B Hosier confirmed that they are looking at garages that require work in areas where there is strong demand and a programme of works is being put together to focus on these areas first.

Cllr Capozzi asked if the decrease in rental income could be a result of not having garages of good enough quality in areas where they are required. B Hosier explained that there is a 3-year business plan for garages with a stretch income target for each year and around £3.2m income was achieved in 2022-23. There is a stretch target in place for this year and B Hosier suggested that they need to look in further detail at where garages are to then feed into the strategic asset review as some locations may be suitable for alternative uses.

Cllr Gale commented on penalty charge notices ("PCN") and asked how much the Council relies on the income from these and how much of an impact there would be on finances if parking restrictions were relaxed. B Hosier explained that PCN charges are set by central government and that the Council has a right to charge these. If free parking was allowed in council car parks then this would have a significant impact on income generated for the General Fund. There is an agency agreement in place with HCC whereby DBC enforce on-street to make roads and highways safe for road users and pedestrians, and there are very few on-parking bays compared to car parks.

Cllr Gale asked how dependent the Council is on the income from PCNs. B Hosier explained that the majority of PCNs come from on-street locations, which is enforced through the agency agreement with HCC. This income is received by DBC and if this was not enforced then roads and highways would become more dangerous. B Hosier

stated that if DBC chose to not charge for parking in car parks then this would have a significant impact on the income generated for the General Fund. C Silva Donayre added that it is the Council's third largest income stream and brings in around £3m a year and that they could look into this further.

The Chair commented on the leisure contract, noting that it would be helpful to have benchmarked attendance figures given that Everyone Active have contracts in other boroughs. The Chair remarked on the Hemel Hempstead gym numbers, noting that the Q4 weekly average has doubled in recent years. It was noted that members can no longer enter the gym unless they scan their card. B Hosier agreed that the increase in attendance is due to the entry scanning facility and that they weren't previously picking up the full attendance figures. B Hosier advised that the gym was closed in Q3 and that investment has been undertaken, and Q4 tends to be busier for gyms in relation to the festive period.

The Chair commented on swimming levels and asked if this is happening in other areas. B Hosier explained that swimming is higher than pre-Covid levels and that they typically see lower levels in Q4. B Hosier noted that Everyone Active have stated that this is one of the highest areas for swimming across their contracts. It was asked if the lower figures may also be related to the colder pool temperatures. B Hosier stated that he was unsure on this.

M Brookes presented the Legal and Democratic Services report and advised that the report looks at the teams that fall under Legal, Licensing, Democratic Services and Elections. The legal section identifies key cases across the quarter with 3 fly-tipping cases and 1 injunction. The report also highlights the work of the Democratic Services, including arranging meetings, producing agendas and supporting the work of the Mayoralty. For Elections, the key activity over the last quarter was to prepare for the local elections and the outcome of this work will be presented at the next meeting.

The Chair asked M Brookes what the main challenges are for each of the teams. M Brookes noted the challenges for staffing, particularly in professional services where they are competing with the private sectors. It was asked if training contracts are offered. M Brookes noted that there aren't any in place at present though they have had training solicitors in the past. M Brookes commented that whilst training posts will typically encourage more applicants, the challenge is that they will require more supervision, noting that they are also looking at opportunities for shared services.

N Howcutt presented the update on finance and resources, noting that there is one red KPI regarding the time taken for debtors to pay. N Howcutt advised that this has been an issue since Covid and that a third of commercial income comes from the commercial property portfolio. When Covid hit, the government changed the policies on how councils could enforce and collect debts as well as how they could remove people from properties. Since November 2022, N Howcutt explained that they have

worked on a programme to remove this problem, though the issue will remain for a period of time as they work through all the commercial debtors to put them on payment plans or arrange other forms of collecting payments. N Howcutt advised that payment plans will not reduce overall debt and the issue will therefore remain. There is almost 100% bad debt provision for all existing debts and this will therefore not negatively impact the bottom line, though there is a plan to bring debt payments back to pre-Covid levels this year. N Howcutt confirmed that other areas of debt not linked to commercial are within the 30-day period.

Looking at the operational risk report, N Howcutt noted that there is little change in scoring quarter on quarter with no significant new risks. There has been an issue regarding the collection of council tax, which did not achieve the annual target in 2022-23, which is an issue that has been seen across Hertfordshire. N Howcutt noted that the collection of business rates and council tax is a current concern.

N Howcutt advised that the main challenge at the moment is the wider economic environment as this impacts the Council's services and creates significant pressures for all service areas.

Cllr Santamaria asked if the Council can work with any organisations with regards to commercial debts. N Howcutt advised that Citizens Advice use several DBC offices for outreach into different areas of the community. On business rates, C Baker advised that there are agreed referral processes, noting that medium and larger sized businesses are most affected.

Cllr Weston asked if what is owed to the Council is taken from people's benefits before they are given. C Baker stated that if a resident receives housing benefit and has previously been overpaid then a weekly amount will be taken to cover this, though it doesn't cross from one benefit stream to another. C Baker added that the Council has the right, in certain circumstances, to apply to the DWP for debt to be repaid through Universal Credit via the DWP's debt management system. C Baker noted that it is now harder to collect housing benefit overpayments when people no longer receive a benefit that the Council controls. C Baker stated that if someone on benefits has not paid their council tax and are given a liability order then the Council can apply to the DWP to make an attachment to their benefits.

Cllr Weston asked if a tenant that owes money can be evicted and, if so, where this tenant would go. C Baker confirmed that a tenant can't be evicted for owing a benefit debt to the Council, though they could be evicted for not paying their rent. C Baker suggested that this would be best addressed by the Housing team.

Cllr Weston noted that tenants can no longer be removed from a property. C Baker suggested that this is the government's consideration of removing fixed-term tenancies, which is currently going through parliament.



Cllr Gale referred to the scorecard on page 39 of the report, noting the £80k variance against a target of £0 on FN03 and £113k variance against a target of £0 on FN04. Cllr Gale noted the pressure of £4.113m forecast against HRA at the end of December 2023 and asked when green items would become red and where the extra £4m is. N Howcutt noted the financial outturn report will cover these areas in terms of variances for capital, General Fund and HRA, stating that the items are currently green as it assumes that the recommendations in the report to draw down on reserves will balance the budget at year-end. N Howcutt stated that the items are green as the variance is currently under 1% and would move to amber at around 5% or if the variance was not resolved by year-end. N Howcutt advised that most targets would be revised in the coming months as they work with new Cabinet colleagues.

Regarding the £4m, N Howcutt advised that there is a variance in terms of the bottom line on the pressure of the HRA and it's actually around £2.9m residual before a draw down on reserves. N Howcutt stated that the outturn report explains the pressure and how it is resolved.

ACTION: M Rawdon to check agency usage at other councils.

## **9 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT - PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION**

S Choudhury presented the update, noting the KPIs for customer service call waiting times, which was red during Q4 due to a surge in demand after annual rent letters were sent out and council tax bills as well as the garden waste subscription service going live. The customer strategy programme was recently introduced and will have an impact on waiting times as well as the customer experience overall, and S Choudhury advised that they are also taking immediate actions, such as improving the voice recognition service to improve call flows, updating key webpages and launching a new customer charter. The other area of reporting is complaints and the complaints service was red during Q4, predominantly due to the launch of the new complaints policy and the application of new timescales to respond to complaints.

Looking at challenges, S Choudhury advised that retention in customer services has been difficult as individuals become skilled in certain areas of the organisation and will typically progress into roles within these departments as they become available. Bringing in new members of staff means additional time is spent training and this is being mitigated against by bringing in a dedicated training officer so staff can take calls more quickly. S Choudhury noted that the call waiting time is dated and that this will be reviewed to make it more appropriate as well as looking at issue resolution rates.

Cllr Hannell commented on item 4.1 of the report and suggested that the department isn't particularly agile in responding to a predictable surge in demand as a result of the garden waste subscription service coming out at the same time as the annual housing rent. Cllr Hannell noted that the average call waiting time was 12 minutes

and 35 seconds during this period and asked if there is an intention to respond to predicted surges in demand in future. S Choudhury confirmed that they did predict the demand and that an additional customer services role was created to deal with the additional calls that would come in as a result. The customer strategy looks to reduce call waiting times over the year and communication has been sent out to encourage people to self-serve where possible or looking at providing call-backs when there are lower demands.

Cllr Cox queried how the customer service calls and waiting times are currently monitored. S Choudhury explained that they use a dashboard with two supervisors who monitor these to identify high levels across each department. If there are areas with higher waiting times then staff will be brought over to take basic details and see if they can help resolve the issue or provide a call-back service with someone more skilled in the area. Cllr Cox asked if waiting times depend on the number of staff for each team. S Choudhury confirmed this, noting that customer service staff will be skilled in particular areas and, as they become multi-skilled, they can take more calls.

Y Salvin presented the update on digital and ICT, noting the KPIs on IT system availability, which is currently stable across the network, and the number of incidents resolved within 2 days is currently below the target at 90%. Y Salvin advised that this is due to vacancies in the team and that the team is looking at how it delivers its service. The team is therefore looking at improving technology that allows them to service the workforce better and identifying areas where processes can be automated to help create capacity within the team. Y Salvin commented on the new digital forum, noting that this has now been approved by SLT and that 14 initiatives have come through it, of which 8 will be paused as the digital platform will deliver these.

Cllr Gale noted that he had received an email from ICT stating that he reports to Cllr Williams and that Jennie Webb is still listed as assistant to the opposition. Y Salvin confirmed that these issues would be addressed and thanked the councillor for raising them.

Cllr Cox asked how residents without internet access can reach online services. Y Salvin confirmed that DBC will not go digital-only and is focused on an Omni-channel approach. The team is looking to simplify the process, though there are no intentions to cut off access to channels. It is hoped that customers will increasingly use the new online portal.

K Soley presented the update on communications, noting that in Q4 there were a number of recognition and celebration days and that the team will circulate an updated calendar of corporate and civic events to all members. On internal communications, there is a full communications programme, including the quarterly staff update session, which saw over 300 colleagues attend in person and online, and the internal campaigns, such as staff recognition schemes and other information

for staff. Regarding the print and digital publications, there are 12 different publications, particularly Dacorum Life, which now has over 12.8k subscribers. Social media channels continue to grow with Q4 seeing a significant growth in LinkedIn connections.

Cllr Santamaria asked how the Dacorum Life digital edition is promoted. K Soley noted that this is communicated through any touchpoint with DBC and is recommended as the best route to get the latest information. The open rates are well above industry standards and it is now a primary channel.

Cllr Weston thanked the team for all the reports.

## **10**                    **2022/23 PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT**

The Chair noted that the risk register had not been discussed previously and suggested that this first be returned to for any questions. No questions were raised by members.

N Howcutt presented the report, noting the error on the front page of the executive summary and confirmed that the pressure on the underlying surplus should be £0.065m. The General Fund has a pressure of £65k, which is in line with the Q3 report. Large pressures have been experienced due to the rise in inflation, though this has also meant increased interest rates and there has therefore been a significant improvement on the treasury investment of over £1m. On HRA, there is a bottom line pressure of £2.9m, which will require an additional £1.5m draw down from reserves as agreed in Q3 where it was agreed that £800k would be drawn down. There has been a significant increase in the cost of maintenance and repairs due to cost inflation and also the Covid backlog as well as additional requirements from government, such as addressing damp and mould issues. Large growth has been factored into the HRA budget for 2023-24, though it will be a challenging budget as cost pressures increase. On capital, there has been significant slippage, and the planning moratorium has impacted this, meaning that planning proposals could not be approved for 6 months. Some approvals will come to Cabinet next month so will start to progress. On the General Fund, there have been fleet delays and a housing project. Regarding The Nickey Line, it was confirmed that this is delivered by HCC and will now be delivered in 2023-24.

Cllr Hannell referred to page 73 of the report and suggested that the current budget of £21.56m against the forecasted outturn of £22.9m means there is 6.6% more money. N Howcutt advised that the core funding is a combination of revenue support grant, business rates, council tax income and other grants, noting that additional funding was received, though some grants come in and go straight out. For The Nickey Line, N Howcutt advised that £600k came into DBC and was then paid to HCC. On how this is broken down, N Howcutt stated that the baseline funding for

business rates was in line with expectations, and council tax was slightly low in terms of collection rate, though in line with expectations.

Cllr Hannell suggested that the Council did well to receive an additional 6.6% from the government. N Howcutt advised that the vast majority of this went straight out again and has no impact on the Council.

The Chair advised that most grants are proactively applied for by members of the team and were unlikely to be known about when budgets were set. N Howcutt agreed, noting that a report will go to Cabinet regarding UKSPF, a new grant received in year. Quarterly reports will provide more detailed reporting.

Cllr Elliot referred to the item on resident service on page 74 of the report, noting the roll out of the new waste service optimisation project in July and asked if this has started. A Wilkie noted that the planning work is going well and a meeting will take place tomorrow on whether to proceed, and whilst it is likely to go ahead, the work may not commence until beginning of August. N Howcutt added that there has been housing growth over recent years, though waste collection routes have not been optimised and a large project is underway to look at how to optimise costs and efficiency. N Howcutt stated that whilst there will be a staffing impact, there will be no redundancies and they will reduce the reliance on agency staff, as well as reducing the number of vehicles used and fuel required.

The Chair commented on the slippage on the 3 major capital programmes and asked if the pressure of increasing costs have been factored into this. N Howcutt noted that Cabinet approve the budget and if the budget needs to be increased then they will return to Cabinet. There are projects over the next 2-3 years that are likely to be more expensive than the approved budget due to delays and contingency is built in to allow for this. The Chair clarified that increases would not be recognised until there is a capital request and that they couldn't look at a project to see if they could check if the budget is still adequate. N Howcutt advised that the majority of budgets are as expected and that housing is where they will likely see additional pressure.

The Chair commented on the HRA and £5m of repairs, asking if any of this investment is expected to lower maintenance costs going forward. N Howcutt explained that they have increased the repairs and maintenance budget in the HRA for 2023-24 by 25% as it was understood that prices have increased, so the HRA will be closely monitored going forward.

The Chair asked if the financial outturn spreadsheet could be included as a separate report so they can be checked alongside other reports. N Howcutt confirmed that this could be included separately.

**ACTION:** Financial outturn spreadsheet to be provided to members as a separate document.

**WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair advised the new Committee that the work programme allows members to ask officers to bring information and he encouraged all members to make requests. The Chair asked members to understand that officers would require time to prepare information and that the number of items on each agenda needs to be managed. The Chair confirmed that putting items onto the plan would be handled by Member Support before it is sent to him as Chair.

A member asked for further explanation of how the work programme works. The Chair explained that the work programme is the calendar plan of the agendas for all upcoming Committee meetings. Performance and outturn reports are brought from the officers' teams and other meetings will have specific items that are pertinent for scrutiny. The Chair advised that members are responsible for deciding what they want to scrutinise and that members should raise any items that they feel are missing from the plan.

Cllr Weston noted the reporting deadlines and asked if there would be issues if they are unable to have items ready by these deadlines. Mark advised that it would depend on what members want to see at the meeting but that they could agree appropriate times if the item requires further time.

The Meeting ended at 9.38 pm