

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2025

Present:-

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)
Cllr. Neil Wright (Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)

Cllr. Royston Bayliss
Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. Susan Findlay

Cllr. Janet Forey
Cllr. Antony Moseley

Officers present:-

Lisa Boland	- ICT & Transformation Group Manager
Katie Hollis	- Finance Group Manager
Annette Groark	- HR Service Manager
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Adrian Clifford, Cllr. Tracey Shepherd and Cllr. Matt Tomeo

201. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

202. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024, as circulated, were approved as a correct record.

203. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2024

Considered – Report of the HR Service Manager.

It was noted that the Council's gender pay gap is much lower than the national average.

Members questioned if the data provided would change if the top 5% of earners in each quartile were removed. The HR Services Manager responded that this would need to be explored further and an update could be provided to Scrutiny on this.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

To enable Scrutiny to monitor pay differentials by gender throughout the Council.

204. ESTABLISHMENT 2024/25 AND 2025/26

Considered - Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Members were concerned to learn that number of days lost to sickness in 2023/24 was 10.73 days per employee, compared to 7.66 days in the previous year. There was an increase of 869 days lost to long term sickness in 2023/24 and short term sickness also increased with an additional 180 days recorded in 2023/24.

Members also noted that staff turnover for 2023/24 was 15.51% compared to 16.02% in the previous year.

Members requested that the HR Manager be invited to the next meeting to provide further information on long term sickness, including a breakdown of the number of long term staff on stress related absences for further discussion.

Members questioned the finance service overspend and the Finance Group Manager responded this was due to a number of experienced staff leaving the authority and the need to employ adequate cover and train replacement staff.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

It is appropriate for Scrutiny Commission to receive financial reports for consideration.

205. SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS DRAFT 2025/26 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Considered – Report of the Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer.

DECISION

That the report and Statement on the Administrations 2025-26 Draft Budget Proposals for submission to Cabinet Executive on 24 February 2025 be approved.

Reason:

Scrutiny Commission has a mandate to scrutinise the Administration's draft budget proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet which it is obliged to consider before making final recommendations on the Budget to Council.

206. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members accepted the items on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25.

Cllr. Luke Cousin requested that the Scrutiny Commissioners consider adding the process for consideration of disposal of land to Parishes.

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown asked Members for feedback on scrutiny of the budget meetings. Feedback included:

- Lots of uncertainty around the one year settlement, and how much value scrutiny can add.
- The process was quite rushed – Members commented that they felt the papers for the meetings were issued quite late, making it difficult to process and read them.
- Some commented that they felt the portfolio holder sessions were quite tame, with questions having been pre-planned and sent to them to respond to.
- Many questions were unanswered because of Local Government Reorganisation.
- Members preferred it when portfolio holders highlighted their key priorities to the meeting.
- Members considered inviting portfolio holders to attend a Scrutiny Commission meeting annually to provide an update of their portfolio. This would aid Members in their understanding of the portfolio holders areas of responsibility, also ensuring Scrutiny's work programme matched with any priorities.

207. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

208. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no additional actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.14 P.M.