

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Present: Councillor Oakes (Chair)  
Councillors Ashworth, Hughes and Lythgoe**

**Rob Huntington, Chief Executive  
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development  
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)  
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)  
Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services**

**Also present: M Forrest, Operations Supervisor  
N Holt, Transport Co-ordinator  
1 member of the public**

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors A Barnes and McInnes.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

**3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No written questions had been submitted.

**6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Deputy Leader gave a brief overview of the items discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**7. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to introduce a Tree Inspection programme, that Unmaintained Woodland areas do not have a formal inspection programme and acknowledges the scale of Ash Dieback.

**Resolved:**

Cabinet agreed:

1. A Tree Inspection programme for maintained parks, cemeteries and other open spaces be introduced (detailed in para 5a) as follows;
  - Parks and Cemeteries – 2 yearly
  - Other Green Spaces – 4 yearly

2. That Unmaintained Woodland areas would not be inspected under a formal inspection programme. The Unmaintained estate would remain as a responsive service, where Property Services obtained inspections / remedial works as required.
3. The scale of Ash Dieback in the Maintained land was acknowledged and the identification of resources for a programme of removal was approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

To acknowledge the Council's proposed approach to tree management and inspection within the borough whilst noting the impact of Ash Dieback and the potential resource implications this brings.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider and approve the Council's Communications Strategy as set out in the report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The report was welcomed and it was good to see a connection to Council's vision.
- The Residents' Survey was underway; listening to residents views was important.
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on the Action Plan's progress.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet considered and approved the Council's Communications Strategy as set out in the report.

**Reason for Decision:**

A clear and defined Communications Strategy will support the Council in communicating to both internal and external stakeholders. Improving the Council's communication and engagement will support the delivery of the Valley Plan 2021-25 – Our Place, Our Plan.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**9. PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2023/24**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider and note the performance of the Council.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The new report format was preferred as it shows the direction of travel and provides a good summary.
- The new format was easier for the public to read.
- Disabled Facilities Grants to be promoted; new policy to be presented to Cabinet in due course.
- Are some of the metrics an effective measurement.
- It was good to note the compliments received.
- The report needed additional interpretation to put context to the RAG rating.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet considered and noted the performance of the Council as detailed in the report.

**Reason for Decision:**

Monitoring of the Council's performance management will enable Cabinet to identify any actions, projects, performance indicators or risks.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**10. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1 2023/24**

The Lead Member for Resources asked the Chief Finance Officer to outline the report, which asked Cabinet to note the content of the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The overall position was noted.
- Use of temporary housing; more residents were in need of support which was challenging.
- Reduced funding from Central Government.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet noted the content of the Q1 financial monitoring report.

**Reason for Decision:**

To note the Quarter 1 monitoring report.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**The meeting concluded at 6.51pm**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE