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## Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of a Scrutiny Committee meeting held at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 10th August, 2023 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN.**

### PRESENT

Councillor David Hughes - In the Chair

Councillors: Nigel Norman Edwards-Walker, Gareth Gee, Laura Mellstrom, Roger Shelley, Peter Slack, Nick Whitehead and Peter Dobbs

Present as substitute – Councillor(s): Peter Dobbs

Tommy Shaw (Democratic Services Team Leader), Lucy Harrison (Democratic Services Assistant) and Paul Wilson (Chief Executive)

### Note:

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### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor(s): Robert Archer, Tony Morley and Nick Wilton

### 92/23 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

### 93/23 - INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

### 94/23 - SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Democratic Services Team Leader introduced a report aiming to assist the Committee in setting its Work Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year. The report

sought approval of the draft Work Programme and the Scrutiny Review Scope Template. The report also recommended that authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader to make amendments to the Scrutiny Work Programme in between meetings, subject to agreement of the Chair.

It was noted within the report that the Council had established a Scrutiny Committee in July 2022, following a commitment under the previous administration to provide a body for detailed questioning by members. Following the elections, training was provided by the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, supported by a Senior Governance Consultant from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This training focused on the role of scrutiny in local government, the importance of developing a programme of work and ensuring that the committee was focused on impact and outcomes.

As this was the first official meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Members were asked to consider several options which had been brought forward as potential topics for the Committee to explore. Members were asked to shortlist and prioritise these topics to ensure that the approved work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year was both targeted and deliverable within the identified timeframes.

It was moved by Councillor Nick Whitehead, Seconded by Councillor Peter Dobbs and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the draft Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2023-24 municipal year be approved, and any additional items to be added or removed.
2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader to make amendments to the Scrutiny Work Programme in between meetings, subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.
3. That the Scrutiny Review Scope Template (Appendix 2) be approved for use and authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader, subject to consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, to undertake a scoping exercise for scrutiny review topic identified below:
  - Strengthening consultation and engagement processes to increase confidence in the Council's openness and transparency, with examination of the consultation process carried out regarding the Ashbourne Air Quality Action Plan.
4. That further work be undertaken to allow for the following topics as identified below to be explored in further detail by the Scrutiny Committee:
  - The Council's Waste Contract.
  - Enhancing staff recruitment and retention policies and practices.
  - Investigating the sewage discharge and flooding issues being experienced in the Matlock area.

The Chairman declared the motion **CARRIED**.

## **95/23 - COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

The Chief Executive introduced a report which provided Members with information on formal complaints made under the District Council's internal Complaints Procedures; those referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), and against individual elected Member behaviour at Town, Parish, and District Council level.

The three stages of the Council's Complaints Procedure were detailed within the report. During 2022/23 the Council received a total of 405 complaints in respect of its services and functions. 88% of complaints were resolved at stage 1, with 10% resolved at stage 2 and 2% progressing to stage 3.

Members were informed that on 19 July 2023, the LGO wrote to the District Council to confirm that during the 2022/23 year the LGO had undertaken 6 detailed investigations in respect of complaints about the authority and had not upheld any complaints. This compared to a figure of 59% of complaints being upheld on average in similar authorities.

There were 4 formal complaints alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members during 2022/23. Within these complaints there were 2 alleged breaches by District Councillors and 2 alleged breaches by town or parish councillors. None of the complaints received in 2022/23 were subject to investigation and were resolved by the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officers at the initial assessment stage.

It was moved by Councillor Roger Shelley, seconded by Councillor Peter Dobbs and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the Complaints Annual Report for the period from April 2022 to March 2023 be received.

The Chairman declared the motion **CARRIED**.

**Meeting Closed: 7.08 pm**

**Chairman**