

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on Wednesday 12 October at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor C Lynn (Chairman)	(P)	Councillor I Jeffrey (Vice Chairman)	(P)
Councillor N Adams-King	(P)	Councillor P Hurst	(P)
Councillor D Baverstock	(P)	Councillor J Lovell	(P)
Councillor J Cockaday	(P)	Councillor J Neal	(P)
Councillor C Dowden	(P)	Councillor J Ray	(-)
Councillor D Drew	(A)	Councillor B Page	(P)
Councillor B Few Brown	(P)	Councillor T Preston	(P)
Councillor A Finlay	(A)	Councillor K Tilling	(A)
Vacancy			

Also in attendance:

Councillor Z Brooks	Councillor P North
Councillor P Giddings	Councillor I Richards
Councillor S Hawke	

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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Councillor Role Definition

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which sought the Committee's comments on the revised Councillor Role Definition for all members.

Following the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Constitution Review Panel in 2011, the Councillor Role Definition for all Members had been updated, however since 2011 the Council had undertaken a number of projects and initiatives as part of its corporate priorities to help develop the role of the Councillor. In particular the introduction of Members as community leaders, facilitators and working with local communities to help them prioritise, plan and action their priorities.

It was therefore felt that the Councillor Role Definition for all Members should be updated to more accurately reflect this diverse role with particular reference to the work being undertaken by Councillors with their communities.

The revised definition had been developed with the Member and Community Development Group (MCDG) consisting of Councillors Carr (Chairman), Adams King, North, Tilling and Ward. This Member steering group was originally established in 2011 to help develop the work of the Corporate Plan in particular looking at Empowering Communities. Since the development of the new Corporate Plan this has now become 'Contribute to and be part of a strong community'.

The Committee were generally in support of the Councillor Role Description however they felt that the section on Community Facilitation and Leadership should be simplified. In answer to a question The Corporate Portfolio Holder explained that the Role Description covered what would be expected of a Councillor and Councillors would be encouraged to sign the document however they could not be forced. It was therefore suggested that the declaration could be reworded to say that they had 'read and understood the responsibilities' rather than 'accept' the responsibilities.

The Corporate Portfolio Holder would take the Committees comments on board and ask the Member and Community Development Group to relook at the wording.

Recommended:

- 1. That subject to the Member and Community Development Group considering the suggestions put forward by the Committee, the Councillor Role Definition for all Members be approved.**
- 2. That all Councillors be sent a copy of the Councillor Role Definition for all Members, and that they be requested to read and sign the document.**
- 3. That the Councillor Role Descriptions for all other areas be reviewed and updated where appropriate.**

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Fees and Charges 2017-18 Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance on the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17.

Councillor Jeffrey, Budget Panel Lead Member, reported that the Budget Panel had met on Friday 7 October 2016 to consider the proposed charges which were due to be increased in line with inflation or kept at the same level as 2016/17.

Councillor Baverstock queried an anomaly in the charges for hiring a croquet lawn against the charge for hiring a cricket crease and requested that benchmarking should be undertaken with other Local Authorities. The Head of Finance reported that he had discussed this with the Head of Communities and Leisure and further work would be undertaken on this matter.

Resolved:

That having reviewed the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18, the Budget Panel's comments be endorsed.

Recommended:

That the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18, as set out in the annexes to the report, be reviewed and endorsed.

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The Annual Internal Audit Report 2015-16

Consideration was given to a report of the Shared Internal Audit Manager which provided an overview of the internal audit work covering the financial year 2015/16.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested an Internal Audit Annual Report. This paper was based on the reports provided by the Shared Internal Manager to the Audit Panel in this period.

Throughout the year an internal audit monitoring statement for the period was provided to Members of the Audit Panel. In addition, other reports to the Panel, covered statutory reports from External Audit, the forward looking Internal Audit Strategy and Charter, a paper covering the Audit Universe (also reported to OSCOM 20 January 2016) and Member training was provided at the 11 June 2015 meeting.

The overall opinion of the Internal Audit Partnership Manager (as reported to the June 2016 Audit Panel meeting) was that a **substantial level of assurance** could be given that there was generally a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, and that controls were being applied consistently.

The review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit had shown that there was **substantial compliance** with the Standards detailed in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013.

Resolved:

That the work performed by the internal audit team over the previous year (April 2015- March 2016), be noted.

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Plans and Planning Process Panel

Consideration was given to a report by Councillor Adams King, Chairman of the Planning Process Panel. The report had been considered by the Committee on Tuesday 13 September where it had been agreed that the panel revisit the recommendations and bring these back to this meeting.

The Panel met on Wednesday 28 September to consider the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 13 September.

The Committee were generally in agreement on the proposed recommendations however they felt that the wording of the recommendation relating to refusal against officer recommendation for permission was still unclear. Following discussion an amendment to recommendation 9 was agreed.

Councillor Hurst was invited to sit on the Plans and Planning Process Panel and he indicated that he would be happy to accept.

Recommended:

That the following recommendations of the Plans and Planning Process Panel be approved for consideration by Cabinet:

In relation to the Plans Panel it is recommended that

- 1. The Plans Panel, which is currently responsible for advising on the development of the Local Plan, should become a formal panel of the Council.**
- 2. The composition of the new Plans Panel should be calculated using a political balance formula that reflects the overall make-up of the Council and take into account geographical representation.**
- 3. The Plans Panel does not have any delegated authority and is advisory in nature. As a result and as it is likely to be dealing, in the main, with confidential policy development matters it proposed that it is not open to the public to attend.**
- 4. Meetings of the new Plans Panel will be open to any member who wishes to attend.**
- 5. Meetings should feature on the corporate calendar and agendas and notes (marked CONFIDENTIAL) should be circulated to all members.**

In relation to the Area Committees it is recommended that:

- 6. An alteration to the Scheme of Delegation such that where a minor application is contrary to policy this is only brought to the Area Committee when there has been objection or adverse comment from a consultee or third party.**
- 7. An alteration to the Scheme of Delegation such that where there is an officer or member interest in an application this is only brought to the Area Committee when there has been objection or adverse comment from a consultee or third party.**

8. **If a member has identified an application as one that should be called to committee upon it being initially advertised, the member should be contacted to ask if they still wish it to be heard once an officer recommendation has been agreed.**
9. **When the Area Committee votes against an officer's recommendation, officers should assist members in ensuring the appropriateness of the new Motion.**
10. **The Peer Review of Planning Committees offered by the Planning Advisory Service should go ahead.**

155 **Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered the Work Programme and noted that the update by the Andover Town Centre Manager had been moved to 22 February 2017.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending the next meeting and asked if there were any specific topics/areas that they would like him to cover. A couple of suggestions were put forward around rural policing and crime figures.

Resolved:

That the future work programme, as amended, be approved.

(Meeting terminated at 7.10pm)