

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on 18 September 2019 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor I Jeffrey (Chairman)

Councillor Z Brooks (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor D Baverstock
Councillor C Borg-Neal
Councillor T Burley
Councillor D Coole
Councillor A Finlay

Councillor S Gidley
Councillor N Gwynne
Councillor R Meyer
Councillor J Parker
Councillor R Rowles

Also in attendance
Councillor M Flood

Apologies for absence Councillor G Bailey, C Donnelly, C Dowden, K Hamilton,
N Lodge and K North

158 **Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July and 5 September 2019**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July and 5 September 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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Updates on Panels

The Future of Health Provision in Andover and Romsey – Councillor Baverstock, Lead Member, reported that a meeting had been held on 28 August where Zena Ludick, Operations Director for Medical Services at Hampshire Hospital NHS and Diane Blanchard, Operational Director for Family Clinical Support Service attended. The panel had a better understanding of the current and future direction of the various organisations at Andover War Memorial Hospital and looking at future demand and improvements to the current services. The next meeting will be held on 4 October 2019 and the Clinical Director for the CCG for South Hampshire will be invited to attend.

Armed Forces Covenant – Councillor Borg Neal, Lead Member, advised the Committee that he had met with 11 Brigade's Army Civilian Liaison Officer and would meet with officers to produce a scope which will be considered at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Council Tax Support Scheme Panel – Recommendations from the panel were endorsed and approved by Cabinet on 11 September 2019. Changes to the scheme are now out for an 8 week consultation and an update report will be presented to the Committee in November.

The Committee agreed to establish a Climate Emergency Working Group following the decision by Council to declare a 'Climate Emergency' and request Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a cross party working group. The working group would aim to produce an action plan for Council to consider in 6 months time.

Resolved:

That a Climate Emergency Working Group be established comprising Councillor Jeffrey (Lead Member) together with Councillors Andersen, Brooks, Cooper, Drew, C Dowden, Gwynne, Lodge, Rowles and Councillor Johnston, (as Environmental Portfolio Holder)

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Appointment to Budget and Audit Panels

Consideration was given to the memberships of the Audit and Budget panels.

Resolved:

- 1. That the membership of the Audit Panel comprise of Councillor Carl Borg-Neal (Lead Member) together with Councillors Bailey, Burley, Cross and Gwynne.**
- 2. That the membership of the Budget Panel comprise of Councillor Brooks (Lead Member) together with Councillors Baverstock, Lodge, Matthews, Mayer and Parker.**

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Annual Report on Complaints

Consideration was given to a report which set out the complaints under the Council's formal procedure in the year 2018/19. The Chief Executive and Services together dealt with 204 complaints under the procedure and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) made preliminary enquiries about 7 complaints relating to the Council and began an investigation into 2 of these for the year ended 31 March 2019.

This year saw an increase of 15 complaints in the number of complaints received from the previous year (189 in 2017/18). The number of complaints increased slightly this year after a decrease last year. The number remains relatively stable, despite the increase in housing and population in the borough.

Heads of Service continue to be encouraged to escalate a complaint to the Chief Executive if required, in the interests of efficiency and the Council continues to signpost complaints to the LGSCO as recommended. Complaints are also occasionally raised via social media channels including Twitter and Facebook which continue to be monitored by both CSU and the Communications Team. They respond to Twitter enquiries and monitor Facebook messages, directing complainants to the complaints process where necessary.

The consistency of complaints reporting suggests that the complaints process continues to work effectively. Where necessary, trends are identified and managed by individual Services. The Complaints and Communications Officer will continue to work closely with Services to identify ways to effectively manage and resolve complaints.

Resolved:

That the annual report be considered and endorsed.

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The Annual Internal Audit Report 2018-19

Consideration was given to the Annual Internal Audit Report 2018-19 which provided an overview of the internal audit work covering the financial year 2018-19 and the results of an external assessment of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The overall opinion of the Shared Internal Audit Partnership Manager was that a substantial level of assurance could be given that there was a generally sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, and that controls were being applied consistently.

This opinion was qualified as a result of an external assessment of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which highlighted 8 areas of non compliance as they impact upon the Annual Audit Opinion however the assessor did note the positive impact the Internal Audit team had on the organisation and the value placed on it. In addition, three areas of good practice were noted in relation to Risk Management, Corporate Performance Management and individual Audit Assignment Reporting.

Resolved:

- 1. That the work performed by the internal audit team over the previous year (April 2018-March 2019) be endorsed.**
- 2. That the results of the External Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) assessment be accepted and progress on the Action plan to address the areas of non-conformance identified, as shown in Annex a to the report, be endorsed.**

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Work Programme Report

Consideration was given to a report by Mr Ferrier, Corporate Director which outlined the outputs from the discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny annual 'Away Day'.

The Committee had held its latest annual 'Away Day' on 13 July at Longstock Village Hall. The purpose of the event was to allow Members to undertake overview and scrutiny related training and to develop their work programme for the year and beyond. Cabinet had also requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee take part in four 'reviews' which they had instigated and to co-ordinate a review into reducing the impacts of climate change.

The proposed areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme are;

Council Proposals

Reducing the impacts of climate change (including):

- The reduction of the amount of waste going into the waste stream through behavioural change and the potential use of 'nudge' tactics
- The current verge cutting regime in the Borough and potential links to 'rewilding'
- Making the Local Plan more environmentally friendly

Cabinet Proposals

- Review of the Council's Key Performance Indicators
- Review of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan
- New Neighbourhoods Review

Others

- The promotion of healthy life styles linked to Sport and Recreation
- Planning Enforcement and its 'effectiveness' to be included within the Member Development Programme
- Rules for Self Build to be referred to the Planning Advisory Panel

Roundtable discussions

- Our approach to communications
- Partnership working with the Police and the CSMG
- Review of the Area Planning Committee 'pilot'
- Mapping of youth service type provision
- Housing Strategy (including social/affordable housing)

A rural community planning discussion was held prior to this meeting and a review of health provision in Romsey and Andover has already been scoped and agreed by the Committee. A decision to undertake a review of the Council's obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant has also been made and there are slots in the work programme for Portfolio Holder briefings.

Resolved:

That the proposals for inclusion in the Committee's rolling work programme be approved.

164 **Programme of Work for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Members agreed for the reviews and round table discussions considered at the Away Day plus the proposals from Council and Cabinet to be included in the work programme.

The Committee considered and updated the Work Programme as follows:

- Armed Forces Covenant scoping document – add in October 2019
- Council Tax Support Scheme consultation updated – add in November
- Climate Emergency Working Group report back on action plan – March 2020

Resolved:

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

(The meeting terminated at 6.40 pm)