

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**

held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10
3AJ

on 16 October 2019 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor I Jeffrey (Chairman)

Councillor Z Brooks (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey
Councillor D Baverstock
Councillor C Borg-Neal
Councillor T Burley
Councillor D Coole
Councillor C Donnelly
Councillor C Dowden

Councillor A Finlay
Councillor N Gwynne
Councillor N Lodge
Councillor R Meyer
Councillor J Parker
Councillor R Rowles

Also in attendance

Councillor M Cooper
Councillor D Drew

Councillor M Flood
Councillor A Johnston

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor S Gidley, K Hamilton and K North

184 **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

185 **Updates on Panels**

The Future of Health Provision in Andover and Romsey – The next meeting of the panel will be held on Thursday 14 November when Hannah Beauchamps, Commissioning Manager – Community Development West Hampshire CCG (South West) will be attending to explain how the CCG works covering the Romsey area and the future of Primary Care Networks in that region.

Armed Forces Covenant – The review would be held in three parts, the first part was to understand the current commitments under the Covenant followed by consideration of the Council's approach to community engagement and how that guides engagement with military communities and finally a review of Best Practice.

Council Tax Support Scheme Panel – Changes to the scheme are now out for an 8 week consultation and an update report will be presented to the Committee in November.

Budget Panel – The next meeting of the Budget Panel will be held on 16 March 2020.

Audit Panel – The next meeting of the Audit Panel will be held on 29 June 2020.

The Chairman updated members on the Climate Crisis Working Group and explained that there will be seven work streams. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development handed round a draft of the scoping document. The scoping document set out the seven work streams and the responsible officers for each workstream. The Chairman explained that the officers will contact each of the Lead Members shortly to begin to refine each of the workstreams and to start to build the project plan.

Progress on the work would form a main agenda item for the next Committee.

Members were allocated to the work streams as below;

- **Digital Working** – Councillor Daas (lead member) together with Councillors Borg-Neal, Lodge and Thom.
- **Working with our Communities and Business** – Councillor Hamilton (lead member) together with Councillors Drew and Parker.
- **Premises and Asset Management** – Councillor Brooks (Lead Member) together with Councillors Baverstock and Gidley.
- **Reducing, reusing and recycling** – Councillor Johnston (Environmental Portfolio Holder and lead member together with Councillors Andersen and Lodge.
- **Transport Fleet and Plant** – Councillor Johnston (Environmental Portfolio Holder and lead member) together with Councillors Burley and Coole.
- **Enhancing the Natural Environment** – Councillor Rowles (lead member) together with Councillors Donnelly, C Dowden and Gwynne.
- **Infrastructure and Built Environment** – Councillor Burley (lead member) together with Councillor Burnage, Cooper and Warnes.

Resolved:

That the membership of the seven work streams of the Climate Emergency Working Group be agreed as set out above.

186 **Economic Development and Tourism Portfolio Holder Presentation**

Councillor Drew explained that his Portfolio was responsible for a wide range of services and initiatives to support business, especially new and small enterprises and skills. This included town centres, tourism, manufacturing and rural businesses in particular. The Council works with Hampshire County Council and the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership to pursue longer term place- based projects. With economic facilities such as The University of Southampton Science Park Test Valley makes a significant contribution to Hampshire's economy.

The Portfolio had recently moved from Economic Development to Planning Policy and Economic Development to reflect the new priorities, including Town Centres, in the Corporate Plan 'Growing our Potential' over the coming years.

Councillor Drew covered areas within his Portfolio as follows;

- Planning Policy and Economic Development Management Statement
- Andover Town Centre – Andover Cultural Quarter
- River Anton Urban Park
- Rollout of Virgin Media broadband
- University of Southampton Science Park
- Skills training and shortages
- Redevelopment of Town Centres
- Andover BID
- Test Valley Business Awards
- Business Incentive Grants
- Independent Retailer Grants
- Manufactured in Andover
- Economic Development work in partnership
 - Promoting tourism
 - Business support
- Junior School Graduation
- Get Inspired careers fair
- Local Industrial Strategy, developing our approach
- Climate Change

Members then discussed the future of Town Centres and it was explained that this will be covered under the Master Plan for both Andover and Romsey.

Councillor Drew indicated that he would be seeking the communities contribution to the update on the Economic Development Action Plan over the next six months.

The Committee thanked Councillor Drew for his informative presentation

187 **Budget Panel Report Draft Budget and Fees and Charges**

Councillor Brooks, Lead Member of the Budget Panel explained that the Panel had met on 10 October to review the proposed Fees and Charges for 2020/21 and the Budget Forecast for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The proposed Fees and Charges report was very comprehensive detailing fees and charges for all services of the Council except for Car Parking Charges that will be the subject of a separate review later in the year. In addition, the Panel received a detailed briefing on Pest Control Charges where the basis of charging is changing more radically. The majority of the fees and charges are recommended to either freeze, or rise in line with inflation at 2%. The Panel therefore focussed on fees in excess of 2%.

The Panel had no specific recommendations to make on the Fees and Charges schedules and endorsed the proposals being presented to Cabinet on 6 November.

The Panel discussed the Medium Term Budget Forecast position and options being considered to close the budget gap for 2020/21. The Spending Round 2019 announced by the Government in September confirmed that the reset of business rates will be deferred by one year to 2021/22. This provides the Council an additional year of growth funding which was not expected. The budget forecast for next year is therefore balanced with 14 options to make savings and generate additional income totalling £490,000.

The Panel reviewed and accepted these as reasonable and achievable options to close the budget gap. In future years the Panel noted that with the likely withdrawal of the New Homes Bonus, full reset of the business rate scheme and assumed Council Tax levels from 2022 onwards would leave a significant budget gap in both 2121/22 and 2022/23.

Having reviewed the budget forecast position, the Panel endorsed the savings options being considered to close the budget gap for 2020/21.

Resolved:

The Committee acknowledged the work carried out by the Budget Panel in scrutinising the Fees and Charges and the options to close the budget gap for 2020/21.

188 Test Valley Community Safety Management Group: Report on work being undertaken beyond that with schools

Consideration was given to a report of the Community Engagement Manager which gave an update on the work of the Community Safety Management Group.

This report followed previous discussions in October 2018 and March 2019 in regards to work undertaken by the Community Safety Management Group on sourcing funding opportunities and support for work on drug education and prevention programmes and work with schools locally, and a request from the Committee to know more of the wider partnership work undertaken by the group.

The report gave examples of some of the projects and operations initiated and operated via the CSMG and would act to inform the Committee of the nature of the work in this field ahead of a round table discussion.

Research by the College of Policing showed that working in partnership to develop problem-orientated and social skills based prevention and diversionary schemes was an effective means of reducing and addressing issues such as anti-social behaviours. Within Test Valley the CSMG has developed innovative and award winning multi agency projects, such as ICE, Community Sports, The Big Band Buffet and Op Mazi, to name but a few, which demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach to partnership working in Test Valley.

Whilst there were many variables which could influence these statistics, the CSMG believe that, in part, the downward trend shown in ASB reports reflected the positive working relationships in place, and collaborative promotion and early intervention engagement work of the Group working in effective partnership. This approach has also helped to develop excellent working relationships between key partners, such as the Police and TVBC. OSCOM would shortly have further opportunity to engage with the Police via the planned round table session.

Resolved:

- 1. That the report be received and the partnership approach be endorsed.**
- 2. A further report be submitted in October 2020 to give an annual update on the work of the Community Safety Management Group.**

189 Programme of Work for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members were advised that all the items put forward at the Away Day plus the proposals from Council and Cabinet have now been included in the work programme.

The Committee were advised there would be an update by the Lead Members of the Climate Emergency Work Group streams on their current position at the meeting in November as well as an update report on the consultation on the Council Tax Support Scheme.

The new Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire will be contacted shortly after the elections in May 2020 to arrange a date for them to advise the Committee on the work of their office and plans for the future.

Resolved:

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

(The meeting terminated at 7.21 pm)