

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Upper Guildhall, High Street, Andover
on Wednesday 24 April 2019 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor I Jeffrey (Chairman)

Councillor J Cockaday (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey
Councillor D Baverstock
Councillor C Borg-Neal
Councillor C Dowden
Councillor B Few Brown

Councillor K Hamilton
Councillor P Hurst
Councillor J Lovell
Councillor P Mutton
Councillor I Richards

Also in attendance

Councillor A Dowden
Councillor S Hawke

Councillor Z Brooks

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Boulton, A Finlay, I Hibberd, J Neal, T Preston and C Thom

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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Updates on Panels

Parking Panel – The Panel’s final recommendations were considered and agreed by Cabinet on 17 April 2017. The Planning Portfolio Holder would let the Panel comment on the draft letter to Government to highlight the issue of large commercial vehicles parking in residential areas and request steps are taken to enforce possible restrictions.

Audit Panel – The next Audit Panel would be held on 25 July 2019.

Budget Panel - The next Budget Panel would be held on 27 June 2019.

The Future of Hospitals in Andover and Romsey – The Panel had met to discuss the scope of the review and it would be submitted to the Committee in the new Council year.

The Future of the High Street – This was discussed at this meeting.

Armed Forces Covenant – A scope would be produced for this review in the new Council year.

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Review of Town Centres

Councillor Hurst, the Lead Member for the Review of Town Centres presented his Panel's report on the future of the Town Centres. The review focused on the role that the Corporate Plan, Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy had in supporting Town Centres. The report recommended areas for further investigation particularly around the planning process and the promotion of town centres.

Town centres were facing significant challenges. The Council had a leading role in supporting them to adapt to the changing customer behaviour and economic challenges. The review explored how the Council could support town centres through developing collaborative partnerships, investing in the public realm, and exploring ways to secure external funding.

The Committee considered that it was a thorough and balanced report and that there is a need to investigate changing shopping habits and how to get local people to support their town centres.

Parliament's Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee had produced a report 'High streets and town centres in 2030' which had highlighted similar issues. It was hoped that Government would respond positively to that report.

Councillor Hurst thanked officers who had supported him with this review.

Recommended:

That the Council continued to support Andover and Romsey town centre through the measures identified in the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 (2019), the Revised Local Plan (2016) and the Economic Development Strategy (2017); and

- 1. That the Head of Planning & Building and the Head of Planning Policy investigate the application of Policy LE12 and Policy LE13 of the adopted Revised Local Plan (2016);**
- 2. That the Head of Planning & Building and the Head of Planning Policy investigate what measures could be introduced to help facilitate planning advice to those businesses whose premises are within the Borough's town centres;**
- 3. That the Council continued to explore opportunities to secure funds to deliver public realm improvements;**
- 4. That the merits of a potential Romsey Business Improvement District be explored in the future, once the experience of Andover's BID, as well as other BIDs, have been fully considered;**
- 5. That the Council continued to investigate new ways to support existing town centre businesses;**

6. **That the merits of producing a town centre prospectus for each town be explored; and**
7. **To put in place measures to allow shoppers and visitors to provide ongoing feedback of their experience.**

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Disability Review

Councillor Hamilton the Lead Member for the Disability Review, presented the findings of this review. The programme of work sought to explore how the Council can further develop appropriate mechanisms in which to review equality issues, including those related to disability as part of an evidence-led approach to decision making.

The purpose of the review has been to initially focus on how the Council can most effectively engage with people with disabilities on a variety of issues, and to draw the lessons from this that can then be applied to working with groups from across the protected characteristics. In particular the review has explored what works best in terms of engagement practice, and to develop a deeper understanding of the range of issues that are of interest to people with disabilities. Engagement with both public and voluntary and community sector partners has also formed part of the review in order to take a more holistic view of wider issues.

The work undertaken through this review has helped to further shape the councils understanding and future approach it can take to meet its corporate priorities in keeping with the equality objectives that it has set itself. As a result, the Council's understanding of the experience of service users will therefore be strengthened and embedded ensuring the perspective of those who have a protected characteristic is heard.

The recommendations within the report will enable the Council to further embed and strengthen its approach aligned to the Equality Objectives.

Resolved:

That OSCOM endorses the findings of the review.

Recommended:

That Cabinet adopt the approach contained within the report as a way of working when reviewing equality issues with a range of groups.

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Briefing

Consideration was given to the draft Annual Briefing report which covered the work of the Committee for the period May 2018 to May 2019. This report would be submitted to full Council on 26 June 2019.

Members made comments on the Annual Briefing and this will be amended and brought back to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

Resolved:

That the Annual Briefing of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be amended as discussed and brought back to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

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Work Programme

Members discussed the issue of local policing and how to scrutinise and hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account when it comes to a perceived lack of response for front line policing. It was suggested that the Leader invite him to address all Members following a Council meeting.

The Corporate Director explained that following the Local Elections members would be invited to a session before the next Committee which will look at the statutory responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members will also receive a copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook. Further training and development for OSCOM members would be discussed at the Away Day.

The Committee agreed to discuss a date for the Away Day at the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hurst for all his hard work and support to the Committee and wished him well.

Resolved:

That the future work programme be approved.

(The meeting terminated at 7.05 pm)