

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held virtually via MS Teams
16 September 2020 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor Z Brooks (Chairman)

Councillor N Lodge (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey

Councillor K Hamilton

Councillor C Borg-Neal

Councillor N Matthews

Councillor T Burley

Councillor K North

Councillor C Dowden

Councillor J Parker

Councillor A Finlay

Councillor A Warnes

Councillor N Gwynne

Also in attendance

Councillor I Andersen

Councillor A Johnston

Councillor M Flood

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Rowles

192

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

193

Declarations of Interest

There was no declarations of interest.

194

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

195

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

196

Call in Items

There were no call in items

197

Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions taken since the last meeting.

198

Updates on Panels

Councillor Matthews, Lead Officer for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Armed Forces Covenant Panel reported that they had had two meetings and a discussion where they had received an informative brief from the Head of Housing and Community Development and would be followed up with a meeting to clarify a number of points. It is anticipated that by the end of September they would be in a position where they would have enough information on housing and community engagement to discuss and suggest recommendations for improvement. The discussions will continue once a fortnight to discuss two more topics. The next two topics will be education and health. Councillor Matthews will update the Committee at its next meeting on housing and community engagement.

Councillor Lodge gave an update on the latest Budget Panel. They had met on 29 June where the panel considered the Revenue Outturn 2019/2020. The variance between the budgeted and actual expenditure for the year was positive. The Panel also considered a report on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's budget and reserves and looked at the additional expenditure, lost income and grant income. The next meeting will be held on 19 October to consider the monthly return for September, the budget for 2020/21 and fees and charge. The Head of Finance explained that things have moved on significantly since the meeting in June and was currently compiling a claim to the Government for loss of income.

199

Climate Emergency Action Plan 6 month report

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development which provided an update on the climate emergency action plan (CEAP) since it was endorsed by the Committee at its meeting in March 2020 and approved by Council in June 2020.

As part of the Council approval it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be the forum for formally monitoring progress on the CEAP and that reports would be presented at 6 monthly intervals. There would then also be Overview and Scrutiny sponsored workshops. Any actions and suggestions will feed into a report to full Council with any amendments required to the Action Plan. It is intended that the workshop will include experts from external organisations to outline what others are doing and the way forward.

Since the CEAP was endorsed by the Committee the pandemic has created a fundamental change to the way we live and work. Even in the face of this challenge progress has still been made with the CEAP. In response to the pandemic the Council has adapted both the way it works and the services it provides. However, there have been consequences arising from the pandemic which have put pressure on some Council functions and progress of elements of the CEAP. The report highlighted a number of areas where progress has been made with particular focus on the digital elements and how the Council interacts with its customers.

Karen Eastley, Senior Planning Officer, gave a verbal update on the end of life disposal of Council vehicles and reported that work is continuing with the transition to electrically operated hand plant. A number of Government schemes have been announced, including to help parties increase energy efficiency. The Council has started promoting this to residents through social media.

Members raised the following points;

- The Local Government Association has made a free tool available to all Local Authorities to enable the Council to compare progress against their own targets as well as with other Authorities.
- Suggested that Hampshire County Council be invited to take part in the workshop.
- Review of office base/homeworking and future requirement for office space.
- Need to ensure there is an understanding of what is happening within the community, potentially through Parish Councils.
- Better waste recycling by educating the local population and more local recycling areas to recycle cardboard and paper and garden waste for more local recycling.
- Member briefing on renewable and low energy carbon sources in the Borough when the work is completed, along with options for the next Local Plan to take this forward in the context of potential changes to Building Regulations and national planning guidance.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Committee endorse the 6 monthly progress update of the Climate Emergency Action Plan**
- 2. That the Committee endorse the proposal for holding the Climate Emergency Action Plan all member workshop in late 2020.**

200

Annual Audit Report 2019-20

Consideration was given to a report of the Shared Internal Audit Partnership Manager which outlined the work undertaken by Internal Audit from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and the overall performance in delivery of the 2019-20 Audit Plan. It also provided a summary of the work undertaken to 30th June 2020 on the delivery of the 2020/21 Audit Plan.

The review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit showed that there is substantial compliance with the Standards detailed in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013.

The overall opinion of the Shared Internal Audit Partnership Manager was that a substantial level of assurance could be given and that there is a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, and that controls are being applied consistently. This assurance will feed through to the General Purposes Committee which meets on 4 November 2020 when the Annual Governance Statement will be considered alongside the Statement of Accounts.

25 audits have been carried out throughout the year with just one limited assurance in the area of inventories. This was not classed as a high level risk and an audit plan has been draw up to address this.

There has been limited progress with the audit plan this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. Auditing requires on site access to records and for testing and access had been limited due to the restrictions and lack of resources. The Head of Finance was confident that the audit plan would have caught up by the end of the year.

The Head of Finance reported that the Audit Panel in December will review the audit universe where they will consider what the biggest risks to the Council are and The Head of Finance expects that Covid-19 and the financial risks involved would feature in the audit plan next year.

Resolved:

That the work performed by the internal audit team over the previous year (April 2019 – March 2020) be endorsed.

201 Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor C Dowden reported that the Local Government Association was putting on a webinar on a draft model of the Code of Conduct on 17 September from 6pm to 7pm

The Chairman reported that the second Awayday will be held on Monday 5 October at King Somborne Village Hall (time to be confirmed). The Chief Executive explained that the results of the member survey will be circulated early next week. At the Away Day members will look at the top 8 topics and carry out a prioritization exercise.

The Committee considered and agreed the Work Programme.

- Move Economic Development and Tourism Portfolio Holder presentation from October to December.
- Add Corporate Portfolio Holder presentation to November
- Add Community and Leisure Portfolio Holder presentation to October

- Workshop for Climate Emergency add to November
- Briefing Paper on the review of Outside Bodies add to November/December

The Chief Executive reported that Will Fullbrook will be retiring shortly and the Chairman joined with him to thank him for his services and input to the committee over the years.

(The meeting terminated at 6.30 pm)