

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on 6 October 2021 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor N Lodge (Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey
Councillor D Baverstock
Councillor C Borg-Neal
Councillor Z Brooks
Councillor T Burley
Councillor C Dowden
Councillor N Gwynne
Councillor K Hamilton

Councillor N Matthews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor V Harber
Councillor M Hatley
Councillor R Meyer
Councillor J Neal
Councillor J Parker
Councillor T Swain
Councillor A Warnes

Also in attendance

Councillor M Cooper
Councillor N Daas

Councillor M Flood
Councillor A Johnston

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Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Ward.

225

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

226

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

227

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

228

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2021 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

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Call in Items

There were no call in items.

230

Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions.

231

Regeneration Presentation

Paul Ramshaw, Regeneration Manager gave a presentation on regeneration in Andover and Romsey and reminded members that he had given a member briefing on regeneration in Andover not long ago so would concentrate more on Romsey.

In 2019 the Council identified a £1m regeneration reserve and after significant engagement the regeneration plan was adopted in September 2020. Regeneration Masterplans were adopted for Andover Town Centre (2020) and South of Romsey Town Centre.

The Andover Masterplan is broken down into 4 areas; Reacquainting the town with its river; minimising the negative impact of the ring-road; consolidating the retail offer to ensure it is suitable for future shopping habits and demand; and developing an offer that is based more around recreation, culture and leisure.

Two design guides have been commissioned and are currently being produced (a Public Realm Manual and a Design Guide for Developers and Occupiers). These will sit alongside six specific design schemes for;

- High Street
- Bridge Street/London Street
- South of Bridge Street Riverside Walk
- Western Avenue Gyratory
- Vigo Roundabout
- Eastern Avenue Traffic Calming

The next step is to plan for delivery with detailed feasibility being undertaken and building a credible evidence based basis for funding bids. There will then be a marketing opportunity to development/investment partners.

The South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan includes public realm works, bus station development and Crosfield Hall options appraisal.

Funding for the projects will come from CIL/S106 Contributions, TVBC site disposals and working with EM3 LEP, Homes England and OPE.

Moving forward the programme will cover 10 years plus with careful programming and planning for delivery. Budget and resources will be identified and engagement with partners. There is a need to build confidence and credibility within the development market and continue to work with the communities through Andover Vision and Romsey Future.

The Regeneration Officer reported that he had finished the draft of the brief and expected the work to take 12-18 weeks from date of procurement however bidders of the tender will be asked to give their draft timetable.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration Officer for his presentation.

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Climate and Ecology Emergency Bill

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman which provided an overview of the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill, the legislative process and reflects on links with the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). The report was prepared following the resolution in response to a motion to Council on 1 September 2021 and recommended setting up a Panel to review the local impact of the Bill. It was suggested that the group achieve this with a reporting deadline of 4 months.

The Bill is currently progressing through the House of Commons and was put forward to assist the UK Government to meet its legally binding target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and seeks to provide a viable roadmap for the UK to play an essential role in restoring nature, limiting its emissions, and tackling the climate-nature emergency.

The report and annex 2 outlined the scope of the proposed Panel with a proposed work programme for responding to the motion as well as providing an opportunity to identify where the Bill complements and could enhance the existing CEAP.

The Bill may be subject to alteration and its full implications on the Council cannot be determined at this stage and requires further investigation through an OSCOM Panel. This will also provide opportunity to demonstrate connection with and add value to our existing CEAP.

The Committee were made aware of an error in the report and reported that at paragraph 6.3 the wording should read

The Panel would need to:

3. Understand the implications, the potential opportunities and reflect on our experiences of deliberative democracy in relation to how this may work at a national level, as well as more local implications.

Members discussed and commented as follows:

- The Bill will be monitored throughout its progress through Parliament and any changes will be made known to the Panel.
- The second Panel meeting will concentrate on ways in which developments in the CEE Bill may be incorporated into the Council's CEAP report.

Resolved:

That a Panel consisting of Councillors Lodge (Lead Member), Gwynne, Hatley, Parker and Swain be set up to review the implications of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and report back within 4 months.

233

Climate Emergency Action Plan

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 since the last report in March 2021, along with identifying a number of deliverables that are anticipated to come forward in the next six months.

Data has been collected for the Council's greenhouse gas emissions for 2020/21, which could be compared to data held for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Covid 19 pandemic has influenced the emissions.

The Principal Planning Officer (Environment) explained that progress has been made on the deliverables as set out in March 2021 and gave an update on smarter working, housing, the Local Plan, fleet vehicles and plant, supporting communities and businesses, the local environment, which included:

- Implemented changes to the mowing regimes for some of the Council's green spaces to reduce operational emissions and improve wildlife value;
- The survey of parish & town councils on climate and sustainability activity to be closed; the analysis of the responses completed helped to inform the way forward;
- Added further electric vehicles to the fleet (replacing diesel vehicles) to bring the total to 11 such vehicles; and
- Supported partners through Andover Vision in delivering the Climate Day of Action.

Members discussed and commented as follows;

- The plan to replace the existing fleet vehicles with electric ones will progress as the useful life of the existing vehicles expires.
- There is a map on the website of locations of the new trees which will be planted. TVBC will plant approximately 10,800 trees, which includes about 470 replacement trees and 3,800 on private land as part of the Test Valley Dormouse Project. The Principal Planning Officer (Environment) will check with Community and Leisure about the scope for any volunteers to get involved in the planting.

- Progress will be added to the CEAP on an annual basis which is due after the March meeting of the Committee
- Carbon footprint calculations which include the carbon emissions in the manufacture of products purchased by the Council, are not currently being employed, but this approach is being kept under review.
- There needs to be more engagement from Parish Councils and with local businesses.

Resolved:

That the six monthly update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan be noted and endorsed.

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Annual Audit Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Internal Audit Manager which provided an overview of the internal audit work covering the financial year 2020-21 and an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment. It also provided a summary of the work undertaken to 30 June 2021 on the delivery of the 2021/22 Audit Plan.

Based on the data provided in relation to the audit plan and other internal governance arrangements, the Temporary Deputy Chief Internal Auditor of Portsmouth City Council, acting as the Interim Internal Audit Partnership Manager has provided a Substantial level of assurance in respect of the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements. Actions to address areas of 'partial' assurance will be monitored during 2021-22.

There is evidence that the work the Internal Audit function has delivered is effective; especially around risk and performance. It contributes to and has influence in the Authority on these areas. It is a highly respected service that is engaged with the organisation and which provides on-going support in key areas, as well as effective assurance on controls.

Resolved:

That the work performed by the internal audit team over the previous year (April 2020 - March 2021) be endorsed.

235

Budget Panel Report Draft Budget and Draft Fees and Charges

Councillor Matthews, Lead Member for the Budget Panel gave a verbal report from the Budget Panel held on Monday 4 October which considered;

- the revenue budget position for the first four months of the 2021/22 financial year

- The impacts of COVID on Council budgets in the year to date, together with the potential for ongoing implications into 2022/23.
- Proposals for fees & charges for the 2022/23 financial year.
- the main assumptions that will be used in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, taking into account known budget pressures that have already been identified.

The report was well received by the panel and some questions and issues were raised including the issue that some fees and charges were to remain at the same rate and other proposed to increase in line with inflation. The Head of Finance and Revenues updated members with the reasons for those fees and charges which were identified.

The £460,000 variance in the first 4 months of the financial year will be updated to the figure as of the end of September and the half year figure will be presented to Cabinet shortly and will be considered by the Budget Panel at its meeting in January.

Resolved:

That the work of the Budget Panel be endorsed and accepts the principles set out in the report with regards to the draft medium term financial strategy.

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Updates on Panels

Budget Panel - Already covered as a separate item.

Audit Panel – Already covered as a separate item.

Review of Outside Bodies – Councillor C Dowden reported that she was still waiting for the Member Community Development Group to meet.

Climate Emergency Action Plan – Councillor Gwynne reported that the final report has been drafted and will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Process for the selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee – Councillor Dowden reported that she had received all the comments and will hold a short meeting with the panel to answer the questions raised and finalise the report.

Enforcement Panel – Councillor Burley reported that the panel had recently met. The Head of Planning and Building had given a very interesting and in depth presentation on the legislation. The next meeting will be held in November.

Communications Panel – Councillor Brooks reported that the panel had met earlier and had received a presentation from the Community Manager which looked at the role of members as community councillors and how they currently communicate with their residents and communities. The panel also discussed how members and officers communicate with each other.

S1-6/CIL Panel – Councillor Hamilton will meet with the Head of Planning and Building and the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development to consider the way forward.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill Panel – Councillor Lodge reported that he would meet with the Head of Strategy and Innovation to discuss the way forward.

237 Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members discussed which topic they would like a portfolio holder presentation on at the next meeting. It was agreed that they would like a presentation on leisure facilities including disabled facilities at sports and leisure venues.

The Committee considered and agreed the Work Programme.

- Portfolio Holder Presentation in November to be on leisure facilities including disabled facilities at sports and leisure venues.
- Add Use of Council's powers under RIPA – November
- Take out 'Community Resilience' from topics to come forward as workshop already been held.
- Add 'Process for the selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee' – December.

Resolved:

That the future work programme be agreed.

(The meeting terminated at 7.25 pm)