

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor N Lodge
(Chairman)

Councillor N Matthews
(Vice-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 M Hatley
Councillor R Meyer
Councillor J Neal
Councillor J Parker
Councillor T Swain
Councillor A Ward
Councillor A Warnes

Also in attendance
Councillor A Johnston

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Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Harber.

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Public Participation

There was no public participation.

289

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

290

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

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Call in Items

There were no call in items.

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Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions.

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Use of Council's power under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which updated members as to the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The Home Office Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Code of Practice recommends regular reporting to elected members of a local authority's powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The Act provides a legal basis for certain authorities to carry out certain invasive investigations.

Insofar as Local Authorities are concerned, this includes carrying out "directed surveillance" or use of "covert human intelligence sources" (CHIS) for authorised purposes.

Members were asked to note that Test Valley Borough Council has not utilised its powers under the 2000 Act since 2018 and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported a 'nil return' however members were requested to note the position.

Resolved:

That the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, be received.

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Feedback from Armed Forces Covenant Panel

Councillor Matthews gave a verbal update on work which had been undertaken following the review to look at the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Civilian/Military Forum (CMF) meets quarterly and the partners now extend to representatives of health, education, voluntary sector, housing, welfare, veterans support organisations, MOD, veteran friendly GP surgeries, NHS dentists and identifying grants. There are various funding streams around the charities and organisations.

Progress highlights

- Formation of new community engagement network
- Production of family welfare packs which includes local information
- Details of GP veteran friendly practices
- Local education champions from Harrow Way and Middle Wallop to help support service children.
- Creating collaborative service schools activities.
- Activities and events for all service children.
- Housing Advice office joining the CMF to assist with housing challenges
- Compilation of database of local businesses who have signed the covenant and those who are veteran friendly.
- Mental Health Provision.
- Formed a mental health focus group.
- Working with Unity to support local veterans with complex needs.
- Veterans coffee morning every week starting on 4 December to meet other veterans and get help and support.

The Council has been awarded the Defence Recognition bronze award for their work with veterans and are striving for the silver award. The Council were also commended by the MOD Covenant Team at a recent meeting.

The Forces Gateway Single Point of Contact (SPOC) web page has been designed to signpost veterans and their families to useful information and partner organisations and will go live today.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Matthews for his very interesting and informative presentation.

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Annual Report on Complaints

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which reported on complaints received from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The Senior Policy Officer made some minor amendments;

- Paragraph 4.2 - 'When a complaint is escalated to stage 2, the Chief Executive has 15 working days to respond. This standard was met in **50%** of escalated complaints with **3** out of 6 complaints answered in this time frame'.
- Paragraph 6.2 – the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman outcome in rows 5 and 5 to be switched (both dated 28 August 2021)

In the year 2020/21 there were 82 service level complaints. From these 82 complaints, 6 were escalated to the Chief Executive and 7 were the subject of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries of which 5 were investigated.

Complaints at service level have significantly decreased this year, after a small decrease last year, a slight increase in 2018/19 and a largely static previous three years. The number of complaints escalated to the Chief Executive has also decreased from 11 in 2019/20 to 6 in 2020/21. 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 Communication 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.

A member reported that he had undertaken some analysis on the trends in the complaints data and had observed a sustained increase in the number of complaints associated with planning matters. The Senior Policy Officer said that she would investigate this. Another member suggested that the report should be an annual report on complaints and compliments. The Senior Policy Officer reported that they will look at how compliments are recorded.

Resolved:

That the annual report on complaints be considered and endorsed.

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Climate Emergency Action Plan Panel

Consideration was given to a report of the Lead Member of the Climate Emergency Action Plan Panel. The overall aim of the Panel was to establish content to be considered for inclusion in the next iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).

The Panel considered 5 subject areas; Buildings and Energy; Transport and Travel; Suppliers and Consumption; Capture and Adaptation and Influencing Behaviours. The report identified the individual topics within the subject headings together with a recommendation for action and links to the Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020).

It was suggested that access to the Climate Emergency web pages should be more prominent on the website. The Head of Innovation and Strategy explained that the whole website was being reviewed.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member on behalf of the Committee for the considerable effort that he had put into the panel and its concluding report.

Resolved:

1. That the first review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan is published in Q1 2022 and includes the items listed in section 3.3 of this report.
2. That the 2022 review includes an aspirational target of 2035 for TVBC operations to achieve carbon neutrality.
3. That the 2022 review includes an aspirational target of 2040 for defined parts of the local community and economy to achieve carbon neutrality, as influenced and supported by the Council. (It is noted that this target is dependent upon agreed measures being available before that date).
4. That subsequent CEAP reviews are published every two years, between now and 2034. And that progress updates are published in the intervening years (as has happened in 2021).
5. That a presentation of this report is made to all members.

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Updates on Panels

Budget Panel – The next meeting of the Budget Panel will be held early 2022.

Audit Panel – The next meeting of the Audit Panel is on 22 November 2021.

Review of Outside Bodies – The Member Community and Community Group had made some suggestions and Councillor C Dowden will meet with the Democratic Services Manager to take this forward.

Process for the selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee – This will be reported back to the Committee in December.

Enforcement Panel – The Panel will meet on 8 November to look at the performance of the planning enforcement function.

Communications Panel – The Panel will next meet on 11 November to continue the discussion on members/officer communication, Members' area of the website and Member's bulletin, internal communications, website visioning and planning for a focus group.

S106/CIL Panel – Deferred until early 2022, Councillor Hamilton is still looking for members.

Climate and Ecology Emergency Bill Panel – The Panel met on 3 November and a plan for the review has been compiled.

299 **Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman reported that the Portfolio Holder presentation which was scheduled for the November meeting has been postponed to the December meeting due to a Cabinet reshuffle.

- Review of the trial of the revised approach towards portfolio holder scrutiny – add to January.
- Portfolio Holder presentation on leisure facilities including disabled facilities at sports and leisure venues - moved from November to December.
- The Green Economy round table to be added for January
- New Ways of Working round table to be added for March
- Add round table discussion for preparation on Corporate Plan to a date to be agreed.

Resolved:

That the Work Programme as amended be agreed.

(The meeting terminated at 7.10 pm)