

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held virtually by Microsoft Teams
on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor Z Brooks (Chairman)

Councillor N Lodge (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey

Councillor V Harber

Councillor D Baverstock

Councillor M Hatley

Councillor C Borg-Neal

Councillor N Matthews

Councillor T Burley

Councillor K North

Councillor D Coole

Councillor J Parker

Councillor C Dowden

Councillor A Ward

Councillor N Gwynne

Councillor A Warnes

Councillor K Hamilton

Also in attendance

Councillor N Adams-King

Councillor I Andersen

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Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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Declarations of Interest

There were no expressions of interest.

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Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

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Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December, 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct 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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Review of Armed Forces Covenant

Consideration was given to a report by the Lead Member of the Armed Forces Covenant panel, Councillor Matthews who gave a brief insight into the review of the Armed Forces Covenant with particular reference to Test Valley's obligations, commitment and identifying best practice.

At its meeting of 11 December 2019, OSCOM reviewed and endorsed a scoping document to support a review of the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, in turn enabling the lead member for Armed Forces to work with officers to develop a forward plan for undertaking the review. As part of this scoping report, Overview and Scrutiny approved the establishment of a panel group to work with the lead member on progressing this area of work.

The panel was chaired by Cllr Matthews and also included Cllr Borg-Neal, Cllr Burley, Cllr Donnelly, Cllr C Dowden, Cllr Hamilton and Cllr Warnes. As a result of the review, the panel have developed an evidence base to support future development of the Armed Forces Covenant in Test Valley. This evidence base has led the panel to three key recommendations with an onward work plan highlighting a number of detailed ambitions.

The panel considers that TVBC are currently meeting their promise made under the Armed Forces Community Covenant. However, opportunities have been identified to improve communication with partner organisations and lead on a more inclusive approach to supporting the Armed Forces communities within Test Valley. The recommendations made in the report support these findings and propose ways to start engaging in the opportunities identified.

Members discussed the following:

- The Civilian/military forum to look at engaging with neighbouring authorities with regards to housing and to include links to point service personnel to the relevant authority.
- Councillor Matthews will circulate the number of service personnel living in Test Valley.
- The forum will be integrated into the Test Valley Partnership.
- Available grants will be advertised on the Forces Gateway Single Point of Contact (SPOC) once it is created on the TVBC website.
- The special relationship with the Nepalese community. The forum should look at what assistance and support the community requires.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Matthews and the panel members and officers for all their hard work in producing a very informative report.

Resolved:

That the findings of the Armed Forces panel and the action plan set out in Annex 2 to the report be endorsed.

Recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. That a Civilian/military forum is created to take forward the action plan – Subsumed and intrinsically linked to the Test Valley Partnership. The composition of which will include the various professional and authority representatives from each topic in the report below. Additionally, Army Welfare Service and garrison wellbeing officers, alongside CTP and/or RFEA, where appropriate.**
- 2. That a Forces Gateway Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is created on the TVBC website - enabling all information, advice and signposting for all the applicable services, including links to housing, community engagement, health, education, business, local Forces charities and potential available grants.**

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Covid 19 Recovery Update

The Head of Innovation and Strategy gave an update on the Covid 19 Recovery. As part of the pandemic response and the recovery plan the Committee has received regular updates.

Throughout the various phases of the pandemic the Council has helped to support businesses, town centres and provide access to services intertwined with a number of lockdowns. Response and recovery is being planned in the short term, medium term and long term.

The Head of Innovation and Strategy covered;

- Utilizing partnerships through the Local Resilience Forum to access resources
- Organisational recovery
- Sustaining recovery
- Recovery Plan on restoring economic and social wellbeing around communities in Test Valley
- The current situation.
- Covid secure facilities and town centres
- Service delivery
- Economic recovery
- Grant schemes initiated by Government
- Community support
- Government funding
- Vaccination centres
- Discussing facilitation of community testing site in Shepherds Spring car park

Partnership work has been a key feature of recovery work. Quality communication is key and it is important to tailor our communications in order that the message gets across.

Members discussed:

- Reasons why visitors come in to the Council's reception areas – better ways of servicing customers.
- Self employed not being picked up in the support packages available.
- Identifying those community organisations providing cultural enrichment and educational support who are unable to carry out fundraising abilities
- Environmental Health visiting premises to ensure Covid compliance
- Lessons learnt
- Use of green facilities across the borough

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Budget Strategy Update

Councillor Lodge, Lead Member for the Budget Panel reported that the panel had met on the 11 January 2021 where the panel considered the present budget and the future budget for 2021/22.

The coronavirus implications for the current year has had an impact on the budget resulting in a budget pressure of around £1.8m. The Government has recently announced a scheme to help with Council Tax Support scheme losses and it was anticipated that the Council will receive around £95,000. Savings from Services have been identified in the region of £600k making a total revenue pressure of £1.2m in 2020/21.

The forecast impact of the pandemic in 2021/22 from loss of income and additional expenditure, balanced against government grants will leave a revenue pressure of around £770k. It is expected that this will be funded from reserves.

With new budget savings and pressures identified, additional income taken into account and updated figures following the announcement of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, the budget gap is estimated to be £577k.

The budget for 2021/22 will be considered by Cabinet on 10 February and by Council on 26 February.

The Head of Finance and Revenues reported that the forecast for business rates income which the Council retains indicates that it is likely that there will be more income retained than previously expected. If this is confirmed then this will exceed the budget gap of £577k.

Resolved:

That the Budget Update be endorsed.

Recommended:

That Cabinet notes that Overview and Scrutiny Committee received and approved a Budget Update and endorsed the work undertaken to deliver a Budget for 2021/22.

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Updates on Panels

Councillor C Dowden gave an update on her two panels. The review of the process for selecting the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the review of Outside Bodies panels have met in the last 5 days to set a scope.

The purpose of the review for the selection of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to identify and refine the current informal process of balloting members to select the candidate who will be recommended to Annual Council for appointment. Members of the panel included Councillors Burley, Coole, Hatley, Ward, Baverstock, Warnes, Parker and Gwynne. The review is to identify and refine the current informal process of balloting members to select the candidate who will be recommended to Annual Council for appointment.

The purpose of the Outside Bodies review is to look at the role and expectations of representatives and the outcomes expected, identify the expectations of Council by reviewing the guidance for representatives and identify and define the role and the level of feedback required. There are a wide variety of different outside organisations with different scopes and it is important to determine what that means and the appropriate representation.

Members were happy for Councillor Dowden to move forward with both panels.

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

The Climate Change Workshop was held on 30 November and the Economic Development Plan was included in the Economic Development and Tourism Portfolio Holder's presentation to the Committee at its previous meeting. These items will be removed from the work programme.

It was suggested that the Planning Portfolio Holder attend the February meeting to give an update on neutrality and how planning applications will be managed once the neutrality issue has been resolved.

The Environmental Portfolio Holder will attend the March meeting to give a presentation on her portfolio.

(The meeting terminated at 7.20 pm)