

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Main Hall, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey
on Wednesday 2 March 2022 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 V Harber
Councillor M Hatley
Councillor J Parker
Councillor A Warnes

Also in attendance
Councillor A Dowden

482

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Neal, Swain and Ward.

483

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

485

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2022 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

487

Call in Items

There were no call in items.

488

Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions.

489

Presentation on local policing

Acting Chief Inspector Taylor, Test Valley District Inspector Prevention & Neighbourhoods and Sergeant Boughey from Hampshire Police gave an overview of work and crime figures locally.

There have been a lot of challenges over last 12 months due to the pandemic but things have settled down now. There have been challenges keeping staff safe and managing staff levels due to sickness and protecting vulnerable officers together with the increased work dealing with the public. Hampshire police are recruiting over 600 constables on top of numbers already there. The new Government initiative states that all new police officers now have to have a degree. Local police continue to work well with partners especially TVBC which was highlighted in 2020 with the injunction around unauthorised encampments in Test Valley which has been a success. They are also working with the Yellow Brick Road project in Andover and working with partners have set up the legacy project to mentor vulnerable young people.

The force have to prioritise the most high risk in communities. There are eight areas which are prioritised;

- Modern day slavery and human trafficking
- Serious violence
- Counter terrorism
- Fraud and cyber enabled crime
- Drug related harm
- Child abuse and exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Serious and organised acquisitive crime

Locally there are district priorities based on what is happening and these are reviewed monthly. Currently there are three priorities;

- Reducing drug related harm focusing on cuckooing/op Fortress addresses specifically in the Andover area
- Respond to ASB mainly youth related in Andover and Romsey hotspots
- Respond to rural crime in southern Test Valley.

In the last 12 months the pandemic had caused variations in crime figures which showed less crime from drunkenness and fights to more domestic violence. Figures from February 21 to January 22, total crime in Test Valley is 8304 offences compared to 2019 where there was 7663. The increase in crime in Test Valley has been replicated across Hampshire. ASB there have been 1536 cases which has decreased slightly over the last three years. Domestic violence between partners has increased from 841 in 2019 to 976 with 838 during the lockdown period.

Acting Chief Inspector Taylor answered questions from members around;

- Prioritisation of reported crime
- Burglaries on industrial estates
- Additional police officers
- Speed in residential areas
- Stalking
- Community Triggers
- Domestic Abuse and safe places
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Communication with the public
- County lines
- Rape and sexual offences
- 101 service

The Chairman thanked Acting Chief Inspector Taylor and Sergeant Boughey for their time in attending the meeting.

490 **New ways of working programme update**

The Innovation and Business Change Manager gave an update on the Council's new way of working.

In January 2021 there were internal discussions with Management Team followed by a review of current working arrangements due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed that future ways of working would be designed to meet strategic priorities and influencing factors would be identified for a sustainable programme of modernisation.

Strategic influences that were considered were;

- A clear focus on communities and enabling them to thrive.
- Climate Emergency and the impact on how we work.
- Strategic recovery from Covid-19 and how the world has changed.
- Regeneration of town centres and the implications for our future estate.
- Promote, support and develop the organisations financial stability.

New ways of working will focus on providing outstanding services, meeting corporate priorities and achieving best outcomes for our residents. A more flexible approach to working practices will enable the Council to become a more modern agile organisation delivering our services more effectively. There will be a need to understand any change in customer/resident expectations around service delivery and develop a balanced approach enabling teams to collaborate and work effectively together face to face and digitally.

New ways of working will focus on;

- Working patterns
- Staff wellbeing, support and development
- Service delivery
- Culture and collaboration
- Use of Council buildings
- IT equipment and facilities

Agile working is adopted and recognised as a way in which we will work as an organisation to meet the needs of our customers and communities and the delivery of services. The opportunities for agile working will be determined by the job role and tasks being performed, arrangements can be flexible however the needs of the business must come first. Working locations are not restricted to the home or main Council offices but must be suitable for the task being performed. Teams will come together in person on a regular basis though the exact frequency will vary from team to team.

Phase two of the project will look at innovation, insight and service delivery, culture and people and business infrastructure and technology.

Members discussed;

- Signing in and out book
- Performance management
- Staff retention
- Hybrid meetings where possible
- Technology
- Where residents and Councillors fit in
- Rationalisation of office space

The Chairman thanked the Innovation and Business Change Manager for her informative presentation and looked forward to hearing about the progress made.

491

Review of Outside Bodies Final Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Panel Lead Member, Councillor C Dowden which brought together the final conclusions of the panel to review the arrangements in place for Councillors' representation on outside bodies. The report followed the initial findings report that was presented to the committee in April 2021.

The panel felt that the overall benefits of members being appointed to outside bodies was an important aspect of their community leadership role. The panel concluded that there shouldn't be any significant changes to the current arrangements regarding member representation on outside bodies. However, the panel agreed that there are opportunities to improve the way in which members report on their work as part of serving on an outside body so that the council is able to have a broader understanding of the contribution these organisations are making and any issues they may be facing. The final conclusions of the panel have been developed in conjunction with the Member and Community Development Group and could be implemented in time for 2023.

Resolved:

That the findings of the panel be endorsed.

492

Away Day

The Committee agreed that this item be postponed to the next meeting. In the meantime Members were requested to think about what they would like the Away Day to look like and bring any suggestions and ideas to the next meeting.

493

Updates on Panels

Budget Panel – The next meeting of the Panel will be held on 27 June 2022.

Audit Panel – The next meeting of the Panel will be held on 14 March 2022.

Review of Outside Bodies – Covered earlier in the meeting. This Panel has now concluded.

Enforcement Panel – Dates for the next meeting of the Panel have been circulated.

Communications Panel – The Lead Member, Councillor Brooks reported that the Panel met on 22 February and the discussion focused on the website and the planned communications focus group. The Panel will send round a briefing note on their progress so far and ideas for the future.

S106/CIL Panel – The Lead Member, Councillor Hamilton explained that she had met with officers and updated the scope document. This will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill Panel – The next meeting of the Panel will be held on Wednesday 16 March 2022.

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

The Chairman distributed the list of Portfolio Coordinators for each of the Cabinet portfolios and thanked Councillor C Dowden for agreeing to take on the Coordinator role for the Housing and Environmental Health (including Diversity and Inclusion) Portfolio.

Councillor Borg Neal, as Portfolio Coordinator for Finance, recommended that the topics of estates and investments (Project Enterprise), should be addressed at the forthcoming Finance portfolio review and this was agreed.

The Committee discussed and agreed the following changes to the work programme.

- Away Day – April 2022
- Portfolio Holder Presentation – Finance and Revenues Portfolio Holder (Project Enterprise) – April 2022
- CIL/S106 updated scope document – April 2022
- Portfolio Holder Presentation – Democracy and Governance Portfolio Holder – August 2022

Resolved:

That the Work Programme as amended be agreed.

(The meeting terminated at 7.50 pm)