

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey  
on 23 January 2023 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 D Coole  
Councillor G Cooper

**Councillor J Neal (Vice-Chairman)**

Councillor N Gwynne  
Councillor K Hamilton  
Councillor M Maltby  
Councillor J Parker  
Councillor T Swain  
Councillor A Warnes

Also in attendance

Councillor M Cooper  
Councillor A Dowden  
Councillor C Dowden

Councillor M Flood  
Councillor P North

410

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Donnelly.

411

**Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

412

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

413

**Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

414

**Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

415

### **Call in Items**

There were no call in items.

416

### **Urgent decisions taken since last meeting**

There were no urgent decisions.

417

### **Review of Area Planning Committees**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Planning and Building which reviewed the change in committee structure for the Development Management Committee Structure at Council on 10 April 2019 and reviewed ahead of Annual Council 2020. Due to advice issued by Natural England shortly after adopting the new Committee structure concerning the impact of nitrate pollution on nationally protected sites in and around the Solent, and the consequences for proposals for many forms of residential development, the number and type of applications being considered by the Area Committees was significantly affected. At Council on 26 February 2020 it was agreed that the review be delayed until such time that the Head of Planning and Building and the Planning Portfolio Holder deemed that normal business had resumed and a monitoring period of 12 months had been achieved. It was considered that this point has now been reached and therefore the Committee structures are being reviewed.

In October 2018 the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) carried out a Peer Review of the operation of Planning Committees at Test Valley Borough Council culminating in their report of 22 November 2018. The report identified a number of issues regarding the operation of the Planning Committee structure and recommended the abolition of the Planning Control Committee and modifying the size of the Northern Area Planning Committee and Southern Area Planning Committee which now comprises 13 members each. This came into effect on 9 May 2019.

Following consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, the Head of Planning and Building together with all members and staff involved in Planning Committees and results of questionnaires sent to members, it is considered that many benefits of the revised structure have been delivered and the report therefore recommended permanent adoption of the current planning committee structure as agreed by Council on 10 April 2019.

Members generally felt that the current committee system worked well and the committees were making good decisions. Members also discussed;

- Viewing panels
- Ward advocacy role

- Call in arrangements
- Political proportionality of the Committee

Training is very important and members should make every effort to attend. It was requested that the training recommendations from the PAS report be adopted.

**Resolved:**

**That Council be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the retention of the current committee structure comprising the Northern Area Planning Committee and Southern Area Planning Committee.**

418 **Regeneration (Andover and Romsey)**

The Regeneration Manager gave a presentation on the progress on Regeneration in Andover and Romsey.

The presentation covered the progress headlines in Andover and Romsey including;

- Details of place brand in Andover
- 6 public realm design schemes in Andover
- Feasibility work (Bus Station in Romsey)
- Crosfield Hall options appraisal (Romsey)
- Engagement with partners such as Romsey Future, landowners, Aldi, Crosfield Hall users and sport/leisure providers in Romsey
- Phasing in Andover and Romsey

Unfortunately the levelling up funding bid for Andover was not successful therefore funding would be sought via CIL/S106/NHB, TVBC site disposals together with discussions with partners such as Hampshire County Council, EM3 LEP, Homes England, One Public Estate and Arts Council England.

The Regeneration Manager reported that the Public Realm Design Guide was out for public consultation which ends on 3 February 2023. The Design Guidance for developers and occupiers will go to Cabinet in April/March for approval to go out for public consultation.

Moving forward there is a ten year plus programme with 39 major capital schemes across Andover and Romsey. There will be a need for careful programming and prioritisation for delivery and strategic budget and resources planning. Three new specialist Regeneration posts will be created however extreme economic conditions make forecasting more difficult and feasibility more complex. There will be regular programme reporting and quality assurance to ensure transparency and robust processes.

The Bus Station feasibility report is being drafted and this will be discussed and brought forward in April. Crosfield Hall feasibility will be ready later in the spring.

Members discussed;

- Prosperity Board - Partners will be brought in as and when required.
- Feasibility will include independent financial advice
- The design includes the area of Dukes Mill
- Consultation with casual users of Crosfield Hall

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration Manager for his interesting and informative presentation.

#### **419 Update on the progress of the development of the Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which presented an update on the actions completed to date, and those outstanding, since the last report in September 2022, to prepare the evidence base that will inform the development of a new Corporate Plan that will be considered by Council in Spring 2023.

Over the course of 2022 extensive public engagement has been completed. This has been undertaken across two phases, the second of which, has been the completion of the innovative Deliberative Engagement workshops in conjunction with the Involve Foundation. The evidence and outcomes of this work are now being brought together to enable officers to understand the emerging themes and issues, and potential priority areas that will enable the council to start to shape its corporate plan.

The outcome of the Deliberative Engagement phase was to provide the council with a detailed understanding of community need and provide insight towards future priorities, which could add value to the life of residents in the Borough. A full report from Involve, who acted as an independent critical friend, is being produced and will be published in the weeks ahead.

As part of developing their final statements, participants identified several key principles that they used to develop their ideas throughout the deliberative events. These included:

- Accessible to all
- Consider local needs
- Consider the environment and sustainability
- Protect and conserve nature / greenspace
- Community involvement and societal wellbeing
- Valuing diversity and inclusion
- Community cohesion
- Inclusive spaces
- Connections across the borough' s communities
- Fostering two-way dialogue

- Financial viability of projects
- Sharing events and information across the borough building upon community connections
- Supporting a healthy democracy

The Corporate Plan is due to be considered by Council in April 2023. The report provided members with the work undertaken to get to this stage and demonstrates that a robust public engagement process has been undertaken, to ensure that the emerging Corporate Plan is supported by a firm evidence base, taking into account the strategic operating environment in which the council works, as well as ensuring the plan is focused on the current and emerging needs of communities.

The Head of Strategy and Innovation explained that the statements will be used as evidence base and careful consideration would be taken to balance and deliver these projects and weave into the Corporate Plan.

It is proposed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds a roundtable session in late February where officers will be able to share the next update and provide a briefing on emerging priority areas for the next corporate plan, ahead of a draft proposed plan being submitted to Council in April 2023.

**Resolved:**

**That Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the progress made to date, in preparing the evidence-base for developing the new Corporate Plan for 2023 to 2027.**

420 **To agree the scope and to establish a Panel to update the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook**

The Chairman presented a scoping document to set up a panel to review the Overview and Scrutiny handbook. The handbook was last updated in 2017 and it is timely to update this prior to the elections in May.

Members were asked to let the Chairman or the Senior Committee Officer know if they wish to be appointed to the panel.

**Resolved:**

1. **That the scoping document be approved.**
2. **That a panel be set up to review the Overview and Scrutiny handbook led by Councillor Lodge.**

421

### **Updates on Panels**

**Budget Panel** – Councillor Neal, Lead Member of the Budget Panel reported that a meeting had been held on 17 January. The meeting looked at the changes to the 2023/24 budget forecast since the Medium Term Financial Strategy was presented in October. This included the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, New Homes' Bonus provisional allocations, revenue savings and budget pressures. It also provided an updated Medium Term Financial Forecast covering 2023/24 to 2025/26.

It was reported that finances were better than expected and in order to achieve a balanced budget, it will be necessary to close the remaining gap of £104,000 before figures are finalised in February 2023.

**Enforcement Panel** – Councillor Burley, Lead Member of the panel reported that the next meeting of the panel will be held on Tuesday 24 January 2023.

**Communications Panel** – Councillor Brooks, Lead Member updated the Committee on the work of the Communications Panel. The Communications Panel has been looking at how the Council communicates with communities and how it communicates with residents when they access our services. The panel have held a couple of focus groups to draw on experience from residents and looking at where the council can modernise its services. Consultants from Method who are IT consultants spoke to the panel about the general direction of travel for council websites, benchmarking and different ways of communicating with residents.

### 422 **Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

It was suggested that the new Chief Inspector be invited to a future meeting to give a presentation and answer questions on local policing.

- Update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan – add in April
- Revision of the Overview and Scrutiny handbook – add in April
- Enforcement Panel final report – add in April
- Round table on the Corporate Plan in February

#### **Resolved:**

**That the outcomes on the work programme and recommendations be endorsed and the further work programme be agreed.**

(The meeting terminated at 7.45 pm)