

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey  
on 1 March 2023 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

**Councillor N Lodge (Chairman)**

Councillor G Bailey

Councillor C Borg-Neal

Councillor Z Brooks

Councillor T Burley

Councillor D Coole

Councillor G Cooper

Councillor N Gwynne

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

Councillor K Hamilton

Councillor M Maltby

Councillor J Parker

Councillor R Rowles

Councillor J Sangster

Councillor A Warnes

494

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Baverstock, Donnelly and Swain.

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**Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

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**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

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**Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 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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### **Green Economy Update**

Jennie Pell, Principal Economic Development Officer, gave an update on the Green Economy.

She started with a recap on business support, business opportunities and skills and jobs and the role of Test Valley Borough Council working in partnership with bodies and partners.

Business Support covered;

- Green business event to be held on Wednesday 21 September 2023 from 1pm to 3pm in Andover.
- Business Incentive Grant
- Independent Retailer Grant
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Net Zero Business Support Service
- Rural Prosperity Fund

Skills covered;

- Employment and Skills Plans
- Partnership Working
- Test Valley Skills Zone

Business Opportunity covered;

- General Engagement
- Area for Development

The Principle Economic Development officer would be interested in any feedback from members who are engaging with businesses, any gaps or areas of focus that could be of interest and the role of the Committee in developing the economic development strategy and more widely the green economy.

The Chairman was impressed with the number of projects that are going on and was interested that the economic difficulties being faced are driving the green economy. This was a topic that was raised at the Committee's Away Day last year and the Chairman would welcome any feedback and comments on how well things are going and any ideas for improvement.

Members discussed the following;

- Economic assessment, specific focus on rural economy which will feed into the emerging Corporate Plan.
- Data on the impact of the Military.
- Working with Oxford Economics who are carrying out a SWOT analysis of all data and producing recommendations.

- Using data and recommendations to develop the economic development strategy.
- Ground rent for industrial units and whether this could be discussed further as part of the strategy discussions
- Businesses are starting to look at their own green footprint and encouraging more businesses to look at their energy use. Looking to see how we can support more peer to peer support.
- Ensuring that decisions made now is the right approach with the changing market place.
- Working with developers to encourage them to make their developments more energy efficient.
- Fuel source for diesel vehicles.
- Working with partners to locate businesses that work in the green and sustainable arena.
- Electric vehicle car ownership.

**Resolved:**

**That the progress made on developing the Green Economy aspect of the wider Economic Development activity be endorsed.**

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**Communication Panel Final Report**

Councillor Brooks, Lead member for the Communications Panel thanked officers and members of the panel for all their help and support. The report summarised the findings of the panel and provided proposals for how the Council can continue to develop the approach to communicating with residents. She explained that the highlighted paragraphs in the report are the panel's proposals to be considered as part of the development of the Council's new Communications Strategy.

The Head of Strategy and Innovation reported the outcomes of the two focus groups held with residents to gain their perspective on how the Council communicates with residents. The first focus group consisted of 12 residents supported by the Andover Rotary Club. The second focus group consisted of 14 residents who had volunteered from those residents who had participated in the Corporate Plan deliberative engagement sessions.

The workshops consisted of two parts, the first part was about how the Council gets communications out to residents and the second part was around the website. Residents were broadly content with how they received communication and they were aware of the different channels the Council uses to communicate. There was however some confusion over where responsibilities lie with the different levels of local government. The Council needs to ensure that signposting to the responsible Authority is clear. There is also a need to ensure that communication is clear, readable and understandable. The website needs to be clear and simple to navigate. The website is also a hub that gives access to the Council's digital services and information.

The Lead Member referred to the standard letters sent by the Council which the panel had reviewed. The Head of Strategy and Innovation will circulate those letters to the committee.

It was reported that it is important to keep reviewing communication and look at opportunities to do more work to engage with hard to reach people.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the Committee feels that the proposals of the panel should be considered as part of the development of the Council's new Communications Strategy.**
- 2. That the Committee reviews progress in twelve months**

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**Updates on Panels**

Councillor Neal, lead member for the Budget Panel reported that they have held their last meeting for the financial year however he will keep in touch with the Head of Finance and Revenues.

Councillor Burley reported that a meeting was held on 15 February to understand the planning call in process and to agree a way forward. The consensus was to set up a panel and he has asked the Head of Planning and Building to look at a scoping document to bring back to a future meeting.

Councillor Burley, lead member for the Enforcement Panel reported that a meeting had been held on 24 January 2023 to refresh what had been previously discussed. The panel refined the findings and recommendations and discussed public engagement. A survey has been produced and circulated to those Agents who had given their consent. The survey closes at noon on 13 March. The next meeting will be held on 20 March 2023.

The Chairman reported on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook. The Handbook will be refreshed and updated and Councillor Burley and Councillor Hamilton put themselves forward to be part of that panel.

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

The Committee discussed and endorsed the Work Programme.

**Resolved:**

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

(The meeting terminated at 6.55 pm)