

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover,  
on 14 June 2023 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

**Councillor I Jeffrey (Chairman)**

Councillor G Bailey

Councillor C Borg-Neal

Councillor K Brooks

Councillor D Cattell

Councillor S Gidley

Councillor A Gillies

Councillor L Gregori

Councillor N Gwynne

Councillor S Hasselmann

Councillor R Hughes

Councillor M Leech

Councillor S MacDonald

Councillor L Matthews

Councillor J Neal

Councillor J Parker

Councillor A Warnes

Councillor S Yalden

Also in attendance

Councillor I Andersen

Councillor Z Brooks

Councillor M Cooper

Councillor A Dowden

Councillor C Dowden

41

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Leech.

42

**Public Participation**

Mr T Burley gave a presentation covering public participation, Enforcement Panel recommendations, planning call in system, Away Day and the future Work Programme.

43

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

44

**Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

45

**Call in Items**

There were no call in items.

46 **Urgent decisions taken since last meeting**

There were no urgent decisions.

47 **Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

48 **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Councillor Gidley proposed and Councillor Warnes seconded Councillor Gwynn as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Councillor Borg Neal proposed and Councillor Gillies seconded Councillor Neal as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Councillor Gwynn and Councillor Neal gave a 5 minute presentation. Upon being put to the vote Councillor Neal was appointed as Vice-Chairman.

**Resolved:**

**That Councillor Neal be appointed as Vice-Chairman until the first meeting after Annual Council in 2024.**

49 **Appointment to Budget Panel**

**Resolved:**

**That Councillors Borg Neal, K Brooks, Gregori, Hassleman, Matthews, Neal and Parker be appointed to the Budget Panel with Councillor Neal as Lead Member.**

50 **Cost of Living**

Consideration was given to a report of the Community Manager which reported on the work that the Council has undertaken through the Test Valley Partnership to assist residents dealing with the increased cost of living over the past twelve months.

The rising cost of living continues to loom over many households in Test Valley and with stubborn inflation and interest rates not necessarily yet at their peak, it is likely to continue to place significant pressure on residents for some time yet.

However, the response in Test Valley has been broad, flexible and coordinated. This has included nearly £6.5million in direct support to households from central government and administered by TVBC, as well as nearly £80,000 funding already awarded by TVBC for organisations supporting households in Test Valley.

Through our partnership approach we have been able to identify the range of strengths and assets available to support people in Test Valley and to target our support and resource where it can make the biggest difference. By continuing this partnership approach, we can maximise the impact of our resources, the effectiveness of partners and of funding from central government.

Members asked questions and discussed:

- Members to be kept informed on strategy and future plans from the Council or the Government that affect our residents.
- How much an average household is receiving and what grants and help is available.
- Increase in interest and mortgage rates.
- Strategic decisions will be made by the Council on how to spend the funding set aside for organisations which help residents with the cost of living crisis.
- The availability of the grants available were widely publicised.
- Applications are scrutinised to ensure that the grant will be spent on areas that will benefit residents and organisations feed back
- Data on poverty and deprivation is gathered in various ways including Councillors, Community Officers, Parish Councils and other parts of the Council.
- Funding contribution from Members Community grants pot.
- The Council's grant was increased from £50,000 to £100,000 as the original grant of £50,000 was nearly spent. Should the remaining grant be allocated there is a commitment from the Council that additional funds will be provided.
- There has been collaboration work with the Test Valley Partnership to support local need.

**Resolved:**

**That Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and endorses the work of Test Valley Borough Council and the Test Valley Partnership in supporting residents with the increased costs of living.**

51

**Overview and Scrutiny Away Day**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which requested the Committee to discuss the options provided and ideas for their Annual Away Day.

The Away Day is an opportunity for members to consider issues, topics and areas that they would like to explore and start to build a Work Programme for the next 12 months. Previously the structure of the Away Day has been an opportunity for members to have training and development either by organisations such as Centre for Governance and Scrutiny or carried out internally.

It was suggested that as this was a new Council and that there is a new Corporate Plan it would be helpful to spend some time aligning the focus around the strategic priorities then spending some time thinking about areas and topics which members would like to look at both in line with the Corporate Plan or outside the Plan. Members can also add topics and areas to the Work Programme at any time during the year.

There are a number of ways that members can do its work through presentations, reports, round tables, briefing notes and panels. Each topic and area will be looked at to decide which is the best way forward.

Members discussed dates for the Away Day and it was decided that dates will be circulated to ascertain members' availability.

**Resolved:**

**That the Committee's annual Away Day be held on a date to be agreed.**

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

Members discussed how Portfolio Holder reviews have been held and the appointment of Portfolio Coordinators who undertake work around the topics and areas that the members have identified. The appointment of Portfolio Coordinators will be discussed at the Away Day.

**Resolved:**

**The Committee is requested to:**

- 1. Review the outcomes on the work programme and recommendations update.**
- 2. Approve the future work programme.**

(The meeting terminated at 7.05 pm)