

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Main Hall, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey
on Wednesday, 30 August 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 J Neal (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor S Hasselmann
Councillor R Hughes
Councillor M Leech
Councillor S MacDonald
Councillor J Parker
Councillor A Warnes
Councillor S Yalden

Also in attendance

Councillor J Burnage
Councillor A Dowden
Councillor C Dowden

Councillor P North
Councillor T Swain

151

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Matthews.

152

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

153

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

154

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

155

Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved:

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

156

Call in Items

There were no call in items.

157

Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions.

158

Tourism Presentation

Councillor Swain, Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Tourism gave a presentation focusing on Tourism.

Tourism is the responsibility of the Planning Policy and Economic Development Service. There is a discretionary budget which is currently used for marketing material such as the annual Test Valley Visitor Guide, research, printing, public relations etc). In addition, TVBC owns 13 Church Street which comprises of the Tourist Information Centre to the front and is then linked to King John's House. Part of the building, including the garden, are leased.

TVBC has contracted Tourism South East to manage the Tourist Information Centre and has provided a revenue grant to King John's House.

Test Valley Tourism sits within the wider Hampshire Tourism offer. Hampshire has a number of strong, nationally, and internationally known tourism brands. Test Valley geographically sits between two of these brands, Winchester, and the New Forest. In addition, Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport, and the Isle of Wight have strong brands.

TVBC owns and manages the Visit Test Valley Brand.

The presentation also looked at;

- The current position within Test Valley
- 2023 Socio Economic Analysis
- Rural Prosperity Fund
- Interim Economic Development Strategy (2019-2023)
- Corporate Plan (2023-2027) and new Economic Strategy
- External Plan
- Looking to the future

Councillor Swain reported that there was a plan to hold a Tourism round table later in the Autumn and Councillors Gwynne and Hassleman expressed their interest in taking part.

Members also raised and discussed;

- Grants given to King John's House and the Tourist Information Centre
- External review of the Tourist Information Centre
- Areas of future development
- Type and breakdown of tourism
- Social Media
- Budget
- Brown signs along A303

A number of actions were noted around a breakdown of the type of tourism visiting the TIC, breakdown of the visitor spend and brown signs off the A303. These actions will be reported back to the Committee.

159 **Annual Review of the Corporate Action Plan - Year 4 Review**

Councillor North, Leader gave a review of year 4 of the Corporate Action Plan (2019-2023) and covered the four priorities of Town Centres, People, Communities and the Local Environment.

Looking to the future the new Corporate Plan 2023-27 'A Place for Everyone – Supporting our communities to Thrive' was adopted by the Council in April 2023. This plan was drafted following extensive consultation with the public and delivery of a programme of deliberative events in partnership with the Involve Foundation. The Council engaged with more than 1,500 residents across the borough and collated an extensive evidence base, to ensure that the plan accurately reflects the needs and ambitions of our communities.

The Corporate Plan 2023-27 outlines five strategic priorities that will provide the focus for the activities over the next four years; sustainability, connection, inclusion, environment and prosperity. This will be underpinned by a new Corporate Action Plan which will develop the priorities into distinct projects that will deliver positive outcomes for communities.

Members raised and discussed;

- BID priorities
- Useability of areas as well as aesthetics
- Climate change in the Town Centre
- Impact of Covid, lost community groups
- Affordable homes and supporting those at risk of homelessness
- Air B&Bs
- Involvement in the development of the new Local Plan
- Collection of bio fuel
- Public transport
- Protected species – Management of areas and surveying/identification of protected species
- Verges and roundabouts

- Nitrate mitigation
- More policies to support communities to address the climate emergency themselves.

A number of actions were noted around stats on affordability of affordable homes, Air B&B, Bio fuel resource, breakdown of where 22,000 trees planted and Rural Net Zero Business Service. These actions will be reported back to the Committee.

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

Members reviewed the current Work Programme and it was suggested that the timing for the Climate Emergency Action Plan update scheduled for the 11 October be extended to 45 minutes.

Members were advised that the topics identified at the recent Away Day has been summarised and shared with Councillors. The list will be considered by the Council's management Team in early September to discuss the proposed topics so that there is support to take the work programme forward. There will be a round table in late September to review the feedback from Management Team and to agree the next steps for inclusion of the topics onto the work programme at the meeting in October.

Councillor Gwynne offered to co-ordinate ideas and suggestions for the Andover Masterplan/Romsey Future topic raised at the Away Day for the round table in September.

Councillors Hughes and Gregori requested advice on the formal call in process and this will be actioned.

Resolved:

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

(The meeting terminated at 7.45 pm)