

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey
on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor I Jeffrey (Chairman)

Councillor J Neal (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor G Bailey
Councillor C Borg-Neal
Councillor D Cattell
Councillor S Gidley
Councillor L Gregori
Councillor S Hasselmann

Councillor R Hughes
Councillor S MacDonald
Councillor L Matthews
Councillor J Parker
Councillor A Warnes

Also in attendance:

Councillor Z Brooks

Councillor P North

477

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Brooks, Gillies, Gwynne, Leech and Yalden.

478

Public Participation

Councillor Z Brooks made a statement on item 10 - Update on outcomes of the Communications Panel.

479

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

480

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items to be considered.

481

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 February 2024 were proposed by Councillor Jeffrey and seconded by Councillor Neal.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

482

Call in Items

There were no call-in items.

483

Urgent decisions taken since last meeting

There were no urgent decisions.

484 **Presentation from the Recycling and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Drew gave a presentation which updated Councillors on current and future waste collection services within the borough.

Since 2006 the Council has operated an alternate weekly collection of household waste and recycling. Local Recycling Centres are available for glass bottles and jars, textiles, aluminium foil and cartons. There is also a fortnightly garden waste collection service by subscription only.

A statistical comparison with other local authorities rated the Council as 5th best in Hampshire.

Test Valley Borough Council has the benefit of an in-house service which means it can be reactive, dynamic, adaptable, resilient and means that it is the only Hampshire authority not to have to scale back on frontline waste collection, or associated activity, despite the increasing demand for services during the pandemic. It also provides resilience in responding to change and helping to support other services within the Council.

The Council is working hard to provide educational information in order to encourage behavioural change around recycling. This has reduced our contamination rates, which are currently the best in the County.

In June 2022 plans were approved to roll out a new waste and recycling system. However, in October 2023 the Government changed their position to a 'simpler recycling' strategy which would allow co-mingled recycling. The implications of this are being considered by partners across Hampshire and the Council still has an aspiration to deliver its new waste and recycling collection service as soon as possible.

Councillor Hasselmann complimented the Environmental Services Team on their hard work and helpful attitude.

485

Cost of Living

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Housing and Environmental Health and the Community Manager which reviewed the approach taken by the Council and its partners to support residents with the increasing cost of living.

The Chief Officer of Citizen's Advice Test Valley, Ange Moon, shared her insights on the impact on the work of her organisation and the clients they support.

The recommendation as set out below was proposed by Councillor Jeffrey and seconded by Councillor MacDonald. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Resolved:

That the lessons learnt by the Council and its partners be noted.

486

Update on outcomes of the Communications Panel

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which provided an update twelve months on from the completion of the Communications Panel as resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and set out where the Council has been able to progress many of the key issues identified by the Committee.

In July 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed a member panel to review how the Council communicates information to residents, how effective this is and what opportunities there are to develop and strengthen its approach in the future based on new technology and changing habits.

The panel explored a range of different communications methods and approaches. The scope of the panel included a review of the following areas:

- Website and online services
- Digital communications
- Councillor and Officer Communications
- Communications via letters

The report findings set out a series of proposals that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed. It was resolved that the proposals should be considered as part of informing the strategic approach to communications and that the Committee should receive an update on progress within twelve months.

The recommendation as set out in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Jeffrey and seconded by Councillor Matthews. Upon being put to the vote the motion fell.

The recommendation as set out below was proposed by Councillor Jeffrey and seconded by Councillor Hasselmann. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Resolved:

That the progress made over the last year to deliver the recommendations of the Communications Review be reviewed and included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

487

Updates on Panels

Budget Panel

Councillor Neal advised that there had not been a meeting since January. The next scheduled meeting was 8 July 2024.

Regeneration Panel

The panel had its first meeting on Friday 9 February where they considered and agreed the scope. Dates for Andover Vision and Romsey future meetings were circulated to panel members so they could attend these meetings as observers ahead of the next Panel meeting which is scheduled to take place on Monday 26 March.

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

The Chairman took the Committee through the work programme and the following amendments were agreed:

- Place-based working – report to be considered by the Committee in April proposing a reference group to be established.
- Further update on actions relating to the outcomes of the Communications Panel to be brought to Committee in July.

The Committee requested that roundtables be advertised as sponsored by OSCOM but open to all Councillors and made more accessible.

The recommendation, as set out below, was proposed by Councillor Jeffrey and seconded by Councillor Neal. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Resolved:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, as amended, be approved.

(The meeting terminated at 8.10 pm)