

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover  
on 5 June 2024 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

**Councillor N Daas (Chairman)**

Councillor I Andersen  
Councillor C Borg-Neal  
Councillor K Brooks  
Councillor J Budzynski  
Councillor A Gillies  
Councillor L Gregori

**Councillor S MacDonald (Vice-Chairman)**

Councillor S Hasselmann  
Councillor R Hughes  
Councillor L Matthews  
Councillor J Neal  
Councillor J Parker

Also in attendance

Councillor Z Brooks

Councillor M Flood

34

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Cattell, Gidley and Leech.

35

**Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

36

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

37

**Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

38

**Minutes of the previous meeting**

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor Parker seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April were a correct record. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

39

**Call in Items**

There were no call-in items.

40

**Urgent decisions taken since last meeting**

There were no urgent decisions.

41

**Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Councillor Matthews proposed and Councillor Gregori seconded Councillor MacDonald as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Upon being put to the vote Councillor MacDonald was appointed as Vice-Chairman.

**Resolved:**

**That Councillor MacDonald be appointed as Vice-Chairman until the first meeting after Annual Council in 2025.**

42

**Report of the Council Tax Support Scheme Panel**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the Council Tax Support Panel feedback that resulted in the recommendation of principles for a proposed Council Tax Support scheme for adoption in 2025/26.

The Council is required to have a Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme to assist residents with their liability to pay Council Tax. The scheme must meet the prescribed requirements published by central government for pension-age residents. Since 2013, the Council has had significant control over the design of what is now a local scheme in respect of working-age residents.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in February 2024, it was agreed that a Member Panel would be set up to review options for a CTS scheme from 2025/26. At the Panel meetings between March and May, the Panel reviewed the current CTS scheme, considered drivers for change, and agreed some recommended principles which will feed into the design of a proposed scheme to be shared at a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Councillor MacDonald, Lead Member for the Panel explained that the current scheme is complex for customers and resource intensive for officers. The Panel's objective would be to simplify the scheme for residents and be a less administrative burden for officers. One of the options being considered would be a banding scheme which was used by many other Councils. The scheme would also be consistent with Universal Credit, cost neutral and retain a 10% contribution from all working households with very limited exceptions. Councillor MacDonald also thanked officers for coordinating a very efficient process. It is anticipated that the Panel will make their final recommendations to the Committee in July.

The Revenues and Welfare Manager explained that following the Committee meeting in July the preferred option will be recommended to Cabinet and an 8 week consultation will commence. The plan is still on track to come into force in April 2025. The Benefits Team Leader supplied further information about the principles which had been agreed by the Panel to date, including details on protecting vulnerable residents (those in receipt of the support component of Employment Support Allowance or limited capacity for work element of Universal Credit), removing deductions for non-dependants in the household, and basing the income bands on earned income only, with a broader band for those on the lowest income.

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor Parker seconded the recommendation as set out below. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

**Resolved:**

**That feedback from the Member panel relating to a review of the Council's Council Tax Support scheme for 2025/26 be noted and the Panel to report back to the Committee in July with a recommendation to Cabinet followed by a public consultation.**

43

**S106/CIL Presentation**

Consideration was given to a report of Planning and Building presented by the Head of Policy and Economic Development set out how Community Infrastructure Levy and s106 (Legal Agreement) funds are received and allocated to projects by the Council. This is further to a report considered by OSCOM in November 2022 from the Lead Member of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) Panel which brought together the findings of the panel which reviewed how S106 and CIL funds have been utilised between 2016 and 2022.

Two actions were agreed at that meeting which related to providing training for all members regarding CIL and S106 agreements, after the May 2023 elections (which has been delivered), and the production of a briefing note which was attached as an appendix to the report.

Both S106 and CIL payments received by the Council are used to support and mitigate the impact of new development across the borough. They provide a means to improve facilities and infrastructure and can reinforce a sense of place and contribute towards good place making.

The briefing note attached as an annex to the report provided details about how these funds are sought, received, managed and may be accessed by the communities that can benefit from investment in new and improved infrastructure and facilities.

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development advised that the findings of the panel referred to how the contributions were sought, basis for seeking and then how they are distributed to various projects. The recommendations from that panel outcome has been fulfilled.

Members discussed;

- Lessons learnt from the process
- Evaluation of New Neighbourhoods
- Remaining tariff based s106 contributions
- Children's play spaces/public open space
- Further training sessions on s106 and CIL
- Contributions for Allotments
- Drafting of S106 legal documents by developers
- Making s106 more flexible via legal process
- Better communication with Parish Councils
- Where CIL funding is spent
- Map of where CIL has been spent, this will be circulated
- Water infrastructure does not come under the Council's remit
- S106s are ringfenced to areas or typography
- There is a single pot for CIL boroughwide.

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor MacDonald seconded the recommendation as set out in the agenda. Upon being put to the vote the motion was passed.

**Resolved:**

- 1. The information set out in the report and attached briefing paper are noted.**
- 2. The note be circulated to all members.**

## 44 Progress on the recommendations of the Communications review

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which gave a further update on how the findings of the Communications Panel have been considered and to demonstrate the progress made against the issues highlighted 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 our approach in the future based on new technology and changing habits.

The panel reported its conclusions in March 2023, outlining a series of proposals for consideration that the Committee endorsed. The Committee requested for the Head of Strategy and Innovation to provide an update after twelve months on how the conclusions of the committee had been considered.

The report also provided a further update on where the council has been able to progress many of the key issues highlighted by the conclusions of the communications panel which has played an important role in helping to develop and strengthen the overall approach to communications. This included;

- Increase in digitally restricted access for residents and a range of different ways of communicating
- Proactive steps towards inclusion and working with partners
- Focus groups
- Services hub to access digital services
- Digital services online and ensuring access and support to residents
- Renewing and reviewing digital services
- A digital strategy is being developed and can be discussed at the Committee's Away Day
- Checking targets have been met and achieved against findings from the Panel in March 2023
- Reviewing and improving the existing website

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor MacDonald seconded the recommendation as set out in the agenda. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

### **Resolved:**

**That the update as set out in the annex to the report on how the outcomes of the communications panel have been considered and taken forward, be noted.**

45

## **Chairman's Annual Report**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee which requested the Committee to consider the Annual Report which covers the work of the Committee for the period May 2023 to May 2024.

Members were supportive of the Annual Report subject to an amendment to the venue of the Away Day in 2023. The Annual Report will be considered by Council on 24 July 2024.

Councillor Parker suggested that the future Annual Reports should include broader objectives as well as input into policy development.

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor Parker seconded the recommendation as set out in the agenda. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

### **Resolved:**

**That the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be approved.**

46

## **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 met and received a presentation from those officers who are leading on the regeneration of Andover town centre. The panel received information on the background to the masterplan, budget requirements, the timeline for delivery and the impact that the successful LUF bid has on the phasing of the redevelopment. Discussion was had on the role of Andover Vision in the masterplan and what would trigger a future review of the concepts contained in the masterplan. The next Panel meeting scheduled for June will consider the Chantry Centre and proposals for its future redevelopment aligned to the masterplan. There will also be a change of Lead Member as Councillor Gwynne is no longer a Committee member however he will continue as a panel member.

**Council Tax Support Panel** – This item was covered earlier in the meeting.

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

The Committee considered the items on the Work Programme and were informed that there would be a follow up round table on Enforcement to finalise the work and a future round table on the Productivity Plan.

The Chairman informed the Committee that further dates for the Committee's Away Day would be circulated.

The Head of Strategy and Innovation explained that a briefing note had been produced following the round table involving Southern Water and the Environment Agency which will be circulated to members.

Councillor Gillies proposed and Councillor Neal seconded the recommendation as set out in the agenda. Upon putting the recommendation to the vote the motion was carried.

**Resolved:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – June 2024, as shown in Annex 2 to the report, be approved.**

(The meeting terminated at 7.10pm)