

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 6.00pm, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

Present: Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors; Davison, A Dearing, Jacques, Kohler, Margrave, Nicholls, Noone, Norris, Redford and Russell.

Also Present: Councillors Day, Falp, Grainger, Mangat and Rhead.

22. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) There were no apologies made.
- (b) Councillor Nicholls substituted for Councillor Cullinan.

23. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

24. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 September 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25. **Review of the Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from the Executive**

Councillor Mangat, Chair of the Task & Finish Group – Equality & Diversity, had provided a written update on progress being made by the Task & Finish Group. This update was at Appendix 4 to the Work Programme report.

Councillor Mangat explained that the Task & Finish Group had effectively split the work of the Task & Finish Groups into two distinct areas:

- matters affecting the Council's own workforce; essentially internal matters; and
- external matters, so those that impacted residents and organisations.

The Covid-19 pandemic had made reaching residents and organisations very difficult, so the Task & Finish Group had concentrated its efforts on internal matters primarily. The aim of the Task & Finish Group would be to bring a report forward for consideration at the March 2021 Committee meeting, on the Group's recommendations and findings on the workforce side of issues surrounding equality and diversity.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Mangat explained that:

- The Task & Finish Group was not in a position to estimate when serious work could commence on external factors because of the pandemic.

- The Group would consider the possibility of undertaking online consultations with organisations, but language barriers might mean that the people the Group needed to speak with would effectively be prevented from being reached.

The Committee accepted that it was necessary to split the delivery of the report into internal and external matters and the intention to deliver the workforce report in March 2021 was welcomed. It was accepted that Covid-19 presented a very real barrier to dealing with the community aspects of equality and diversity.

Councillor Milton advised Members that Councillor Noone had decided to step down from the Task & Finish Group. He had been advised that Councillor Illingworth's name had been suggested as her replacement by the Conservative Group.

Resolved that Councillor Illingworth be appointed to the Task & Finish Group – Equality and Diversity.

The Committee thanked Councillor Noone for the work she had done on the Task & Finish Group.

26. **Annual Review of Plastics Policy, Sustainability Approach and Climate Emergency Action Plan**

The Committee considered a report from the Programme Director for Climate Change which provided an annual update on progress with regard to:

- Warwick District Council's Sustainability Approach 2016 – 2020; and
- the Plastics Policy.

In addition, the report set out progress on the Climate Emergency Action Programme which was considered by the Executive in February 2020.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Rhead, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, the Programme Director for Climate Change and the Sustainability Officer, explained that:

- The Plastics Policy was already in place and its aims were set out in Appendix 1 to the report under section 2.
- There was no current intention to update the Plastics Policy, as it was still a work in progress.
- Work was in progress to shape the Council's own use of plastic and discussions were being undertaken with the Council's Sustainability Group. Details of any Action Plan would be circulated to Committee Members when they were available. Procurement staff were aware that when requesting tenders, a question should be asked regarding the tenderers' policies towards plastic.

27. **Public and Press**

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information

within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute Number	Paragraph Number	Reason
28	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

28. **Summary of the role, responsibilities and performance of the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP)**

The Committee considered a report from Health and Community Protection which set out the role of the South Warwickshire Community Safety partnership (SWCSP). This was a statutory body for reducing crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending in South Warwickshire.

The Community Safety Officer informed Members that the Partnership was charged with developing and agreeing realistic and challenging targets each year to address crime and disorder, and at the latest Board meeting in February 2020, the following priority themes were confirmed:

- violent crime;
- serious acquisitive crime;
- acquisitive crime in rural areas; and
- County Lines.

Members were asked to note the roles and responsibilities under the latest performance, which was outlined in Appendix One to the report.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Falp, the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, the Community Safety Officer and the Head of Health & Community Protection, explained that:

- It was a statutory duty for Councils to participate.
- Councillor Falp, as Portfolio Holder, shared the duty with her counterpart from Stratford District Council for South Warwickshire, and each Councillor chaired for two years.
- Councillor Heath was this Council's nominated representative on the Board.
- The Board, made up of Councillors across South Warwickshire and at the County Council, made all the decisions and they worked in partnership to produce the list of priority areas based on statistics provided by the County Council and the Police.
- If the Committee wished to make comment on the activities of the Partnership or required information, the way to progress this would be through the Council's appointed representative to the Board.
- As a result of falls in reported cases of anti-social behaviour, it had been decided that for the current year, anti-social would not be a priority, but in practice the numbers of reported incidents had considerably increased because of the unforeseen circumstance of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Street Marshalls and Pastors were making a real difference across Leamington Town Centre to stop some types of trouble before they became an issue, but numbers of incidents were still high, so more analysis was required to identify the trouble hot-spots. Disregarding issues caused by the pandemic, numbers were still up, but the pandemic had had a great effect on the increase in the numbers of incidents.
- Rural crime figures were included within the report, but there was not a separate code to differentiate between those that happened in a rural area or an urban setting. Work was in progress to be able to separate the two areas so that rural crime figures could be evaluated.
- It was anticipated that domestic violence would be a priority in the future.

The meeting resumed public session.

(Councillor Falp left the meeting)

29. **Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Tuesday 17 November 2020**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Tuesday 17 November 2020.

Item 4 - Sherbourne Resource Park – Proposal to become a Partner Council; and
Item 10 - Waste Contract Renewal – Update Report

The Committee considered both of these reports together because they both dealt with waste management. It noted and accepted the contents of both reports.

The Committee felt that it would be important to bring residents on-board with the changes to the waste and recycling services. Effective communication and providing help to residents to manage the impact of the changes would be necessary and this would help link into the Council's wider Climate Emergency ambitions.

The Committee did raise concerns over the potential problem that could be posed by fly-tipping and asked that an effective strategy to counter this risk was put in place. Flexibility in approach was key.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Councillor Grainger, the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Neighbourhood and to the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

(Councillors Grainger left the meeting.)

Item 6 – Creative Quarter: Spencer Yard

The Committee considered the report and accepted its contents.

(The meeting was adjourned at 7.55pm for ten minutes.)
 (Councillors Norris and Rhead left the meeting)

30. **Review of the Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from the Executive**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2020-2021, the Forward Plan and the response from the Executive to its comments in September.

In addition to considering the work programme at Appendix 1 to the report, and the Comments to the Executive report at Appendix 2 to the report, there were also a number of other appendices attached to the report.

The Chair explained that the planned discussion with officers from the Environmental Protection Team Service, which had been planned to focus primarily on night noise, had been deferred to a future date yet to be agreed.

Members noted the Comments to the Executive report (Appendix 2). The Principal Committee Services Officer was asked to explain Appendix 3 to the report. She informed Members that this report was to keep track of items the Committee had removed from its work programme back in August. The Committee had asked for certain actions to be done for the items removed and Appendix 3 to the report detailed the progress and eventually this appendix would no longer be necessary when all actions had been completed.

Appendix 4 to the report, the update from the Task & Finish Group – Equality & Diversity, had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Appendix 5 to the report was a briefing note from Housing Services giving an update on what had been the impact subsequent to the restructure of the management structure and the additional resources that had been approved back in November 2019. It had been agreed that an officer would not be required at the meeting if Members had not requested their attendance. Members had no questions on the briefing note.

Appendix 6 to the report was also a briefing note, but was from Neighbourhood Services. The Committee had requested an update on the shared environmental enforcement initiative with Rugby Borough Council, following the previous update back in September 2019. The constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had meant that no enforcement work had been carried out since April 2020 and it was likely that this would continue to be the case until March 2021. A further update was suggested for April 2021.

Appendix 7 to the report detailed the criteria for call in of Executive reports to Scrutiny Committees, which a number of Members of both Scrutiny Committees had produced, to facilitate best use of the scrutiny to focus as far as possible discussions to be helpful, to inform the policy that Executive might be signing off. In the last couple of meetings, feedback had been provided to Executive that had been taken on board and had helped to shape some of the policies that they were dealing with.

It was agreed to trial the approach until March 2021.

Appendix 8 to the report, an update on the decisions made in respect of the Task & Finish Group – Role of the District Council Chairman, was deferred until discussions had taken place with the current District Council Chairman.

The Chair gave an update on the Step-Back Review. A meeting had been held the previous week to discuss the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It had been hoped to hold the meeting prior to the current lockdown, but the Government had imposed this before the meeting had been scheduled to take place. The meeting had provided the opportunity to look at the Council's actions to-date and to consider how the Council undertook its business, not just during the pandemic, but also any time there was an emergency. The Chair, and Councillors Kohler and Nicholls had been present at the meeting and amongst areas discussed were:

- the use of IT, including the technology infrastructure and how hardware and software was deployed across the Council;
- the strategic view of the future shape of the Council and whether alternative models for future resilience might help and this could include subjects around finance or working with other Councils in partnership to deliver services;
- communication with staff, health and wellbeing aspects, training and supporting managerial staff to operate within the changes;
- external communications; and
- emergency planning and scenarios when staff could not work from Riverside House.

A report would be made at the December meeting.

Resolved that

- (1) the following appendices to the report be noted:
 - Appendix 2 – Comments from the Executive;
 - Appendix 3 – Action on items removed from the work programme;
 - Appendix 5 – The impact of the revised Housing Services Management structure and additional resources approved in November 2019; and
 - Appendix 6 – Shared Environmental Enforcement with Rugby Borough Council.
- (2) the Criteria for call in of Executive Reports to Scrutiny Committees, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, be implemented on a trial basis until March 2021;
- (3) the update on the decisions made in respect of the Task & Finish Group, Role of the District Council Chairman be presented to the Committee when the current District Council Chairman has been consulted with;

- (4) a further update on the Step Back Review be reported back to the Committee meeting in December 2020; and
- (5) a further update on the shared environmental enforcement with Rugby Borough Council in early 2021.

(The meeting ended at 8.22pm)

CHAIR
8 December 2020