

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday 18 August 2020 at 6.00pm, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

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

Also Present: Councillors Cooke, Day, Matecki and Grainger.

10. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) There were no apologies made.
- (b) Councillor Mangat substituted for Councillor Cullinan and Councillor Murphy substituted for Councillor Noone.

11. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

12. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 July 2020 and of the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 July 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair advised Members that he had asked Committee Services to make accessible to Members the data relating to Service Area performance as soon as possible.

13. **Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Monday 24 August 2020**

The Chair reminded Members that questions in advance on Executive reports should be submitted by 9.00am the day before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting. He also reminded Members that if an Executive report was called-in for scrutiny, a reason should be given why this was being done.

Councillor Davison pointed out that it was not clear how the target of submitting questions by 9.00am on the day before Scrutiny met could be adhered to when Group meetings were not until that evening.

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Monday 24 August 2020.

Item 3 – Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Enforcement Process – Private Sector Housing

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report and agreed it would monitor their implementation. In agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, the

Committee agreed that its Chair and the Portfolio Holder would liaise with Democratic Services to review whether ongoing reporting could be done using a dashboard within the Business Intelligence Portal.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to add a review of the process to its Work Programme after it had been operational for a minimum of 12 months.

(Councillor Matecki left the meeting.)

Item 5 – Article 4(1) direction for Sherbourne Conservation Area

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations. In discussion it welcomed officers' proposals to check and update guidance on the Council's website but expressed concerns that changes to the regulations should not impede people from fitting equipment into their property in line with the Council's Climate Emergency ambitions.

Item 7 – Park Exercise Permits

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations in the report and agreed it would monitor their implementation.

The Head of Cultural Services and Portfolio Holder for Culture agreed to explore if a method to allow new licence holders to upgrade easily from monthly to annual payments would be feasible.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to add a review of the permit scheme to its Work Programme after it had been operational for six months.

(Councillor Cooked left the meeting close to the start of discussion on Park Exercise Permits. Councillors Grainger and Day left at the end of discussions on this item.)

14. Task & Finish Group

The Committee received a verbal update on progress from the Chair of the Equality & Diversity Task & Finish Group, Councillor Mangat.

Councillor Mangat explained that:

- The Task & Finish Group had held its first meeting at which she was appointed its Chair.
- The Group had reflected on its role and scope and it was likely that more time would be required to complete the review because some groups and organisations would be hard to reach and face to face meetings were not possible at the moment, with a lot of community meetings not taking place and the uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. Language barriers could be problematic with other means of communication for some ethnic minority groups. Further information on this would be provided when a written update was provided at the next Committee meeting.
- The Group would be focussing on internal aspects of the review to begin with because of the problems surrounding contacting outside organisations. The internal aspects would include:
 - diversity of staff in the Council in terms of recruitment;

- data had been requested to be provided for the next meeting on 26 August on such matters as ethnicity pay gap reports;
- advertising of roles and internal progression;
- why data of ethnicity of candidates standing for election was not collected; and
- a meeting would be arranged with the Head of People and Communications and also the main officer at Warwickshire County Council who dealt with equality, diversity and inclusion issues. The Group would also meet with Unison branch staff.

In response to questions, Councillor Mangat explained that:

- Whilst information surrounding ethnicity on application forms was voluntary input, she hoped that explaining the reason surrounding why it was of interest would encourage people to provide it. She took on board that the Council should not step outside national guidelines on information collection.
- Council officers would ensure that the Group did not breach guidelines on collecting ethnicity data and GDPR regulations.

15. **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 July.

The Chair explained that there were a number of items that were due to be considered by the Committee but which had been put in abeyance because of Covid-19. He had asked officers to bring forward many of these by the next meeting where possible, and to ensure the rest were not forgotten.

The Forward Plan had been circulated but a hyperlink to the latest Forward Plan would be reintroduced to the next Work Programme report. If any Member wanted items from the Forward Plan to be added to the Committee's Work Programme, a Member would be appointed to find out what this would entail in advance to aid good discussion. Members did not indicate that they wished for any items on the current Forward Plan to be added to the Work Programme and the Chair asked Members to review it again outside the meeting.

Members had no comments to make on recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 of the report.

The Chair explained recommendation 2.5 to Members. He was aware of one volunteer, plus himself and Councillor Nicholls. Six volunteers were required for the Step Back Review Task & Finish Group. The review would look at the Council's response to Covid-19 and would be agile, to enable any key recommendations to come forward before the winter flu season, but also being mindful of potential local or national lockdowns.

Councillor Kohler asked whether there was a timescale envisaged to do the Step Back Review or if this Task & Finish Group would set its own timescale. The Chair responded that the immediate action was to agree a Scope that would come back to the September meeting and this would

detail timescales. The Task & Finish Group would not be looking at the Director of Public Health's proposals for a framework on lockdowns, it would be looking at what the Council did in the past from the first wave and what lessons could be learnt from that going forward.

Resolved that

- (1) the approach as proposed in the report in respect of the Work Programme detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be confirmed;
- (2) a revised Work Programme prepared by officers with proposed dates for reports be presented to the Committee at the September meeting;
- (3) the responses made by the Executive on the comments from the Executive report as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be noted; and
- (4) Councillors Ashford, Alix Dearing, Jacques, Kohler, Milton and Nicholls be appointed to form the Step Back Review Group.

(The meeting ended at 7.31pm)

CHAIR
29 September 2020