

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday 22 July 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, Russell and Wright.

Also Present: Councillors Mangat and Tangri.

4. **Apologies and Substitutes**

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

5. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

6. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 February 2020 and 27 May 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

7. **Appointment of Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champion**

The Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that the Council had two appointments for the position of Children's and Adults Safeguarding Champion. One was the Portfolio Holder, Health & Community Protection but the other appointment had normally been the Chairman of Health Scrutiny Sub Committee. This municipal year, a Health Scrutiny Sub Committee had not been appointed, which meant that there was a vacancy for the second position. As the parent committee of the Health Scrutiny Sub Committee, it fell to Overview & Scrutiny Committee to appoint the second representative. Whilst Councillor Redford had held this post in the last year, she was absent from this meeting but would be willing to continue as one of the Council's Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champions.

It was proposed by Councillor Milton and seconded by Councillor Norris, and

Resolved that Councillor Redford be appointed as a Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champion for the Council.

8. **Future working of Scrutiny Committees**

The Chair informed the Committee that in liaison with the Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee, this subject would be discussed at the joint meeting of both Scrutiny Committees on 29 July 2020.

9. **Proposed Task & Finish Group**

The Committee considered a report from the Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer which brought forward the scope for a Task and Finish Group proposed by Councillors Mangat and Tangri following the Notice of Motion approved by Council on 24 June 2020.

The Council had resolved that Overview & Scrutiny Committee be asked to establish a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of the Council's approach to equality and diversity, especially with regard to race. The Task & Finish Group's report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee would include an action plan with a view to the Executive adopting the Committee's recommendations in the report and its action plan. The progress and outcomes of the action plan would be monitored by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the expectation that measurable improvements would be made by 2023.

Following this decision, Councillors Mangat and Tangri developed a scope for the Task & Finish Group which was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. Guidance provided to them by the Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer, the Head of Communications & People and also the Council's Equality & Diversity Advisor was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee was asked to consider the scope and assure itself that the proposed Task & Finish Group had a robust scope with a clearly defined remit.

In anticipation of the scope being approved, Civic & Committee Services had asked for volunteers to undertake the work on the Group.

The Chair introduced discussion on the item by raising three questions the Committee should consider:

1. Did the Committee support the Task & Finish Group?
2. Were there any changes the Committee would like to see made to the scope if it did support it?
3. Were there any key points the Committee wanted confirmed from the Task & Finish Group if established?

If the Committee was content to proceed with the Task & Finish Group, then its membership would need to be established.

At the request of the Chair Councillor Mangat provided an outline of the proposed scope.

At the request of the Chair the Head of People & Communications explained that an internal audit in 2016 and again in January 2020 had given assurance that the Council had racial equality and diversity policies in place. One example cited was family friendly initiatives such as breast feeding campaigns ensuring that the language and signage used were considered to engage with the BAME residents. All new staff had to undergo mandatory equality and diversity training. Staff involved in recruitment and interviewing had to undergo training to address unconscious bias and it was noted that the BAME representation of staff at the Council had increased from 7.9% to 11.33%.

The Head of People & Communications explained the work that needed to be undertaken, such as work on recruitment and monitoring and she explained how this was difficult at present because the payroll system could not handle it. A new payroll system that was to be implemented would address these.

Following on from this, the Democratic Services Officer & Deputy Monitoring Officer explained the Task & Finish Group responsibilities and the support it would receive from officers.

After debate on how wide the remit should be, Members agreed that the focus should not cover every aspect of Equality and Diversity because it was too large an area; instead, in referring back to the resolution made by Council in June, it would focus primarily on Race and the benefits to the residents and the Council and if it was necessary, other elements within Equality and Diversity, such as disability could be considered for future Task & Finish Group work. The Chair summed up the debate as follows:

- the Committee agreed to form a Task & Finish Group as set out;
- this Group would focus primarily on the issue of Race
- it would bring back to the Committee any other ideas and opportunities as they became evident;
- the Group stayed focussed on benefits it could deliver to the Council and the community;
- the Group give an update to the Committee in two months' time.

The Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer advised a note of caution on bringing back issues that were outside the Council's area of authority and suggested that those should be referred to the responsible authorities. He also suggested that when the Group wished to do any sort of public engagement, it brought this before the Committee beforehand for the Committee to understand and agree the scope and scale. Whilst he noted the requirement for a formal update in two months', he suggested verbal updates at every meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that he had understood the requirements discussed at the meeting in combination with the scope document as set out. The work would be taken forward on this basis. The Chair checked that there were no dissenters.

The Committee then agreed that the Task & Finish Group Membership would be Councillors C Gifford, Mangat, Noone and Tangri. No Councillors raised objection to this.

(The meeting ended at 7.02pm)

CHAIR
18 August 2020