

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 31 October 2023 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Barton, Boad, Collins, Day, Luckhurst, Payne, Redford and Williams.

Also Present: Councillor Chilvers – Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Davison – Leader of the Council and Councillor King – Portfolio Holder for Place.

44. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) An apology for absence was received from Councillor Browne.
- (b) Councillor Boad substituted for Councillor Russell and Councillor Williams substituted for Councillor D Harrison.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, asked the Committee Services Officer to write to the Labour Group Leader to point out that since the start of this municipal year, there had not been full attendance at meetings of the Committee by the Labour Group and to ask when full attendance could be expected. The Chair had already informally discussed this with the previous Labour Group Leader.

45. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

46. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 September 2023 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

47. **Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 2 November 2023**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet on Thursday 2 November 2023.

Item 6 – Abbey Fields Swimming Pools Project

The Committee welcomed Mr George Martin and Mr Rod Jones, representing people who signed a petition who both addressed the Committee for three minutes each on concerns relating to the Abbey Fields Swimming Pools Project.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report with the following caveats and conditions which formed a recommendation to Cabinet:

1. the project undertook a review on the assurance of the environmental energy reduction measures;
2. an independent review of the costs was carried out; and
3. Cabinet should be provided with a full briefing on the previous site analysis that had been done so that they could be properly informed when making their decision.

(The meeting was adjourned at 7.40pm for a comfort break and resumed at 7.55pm.)

Item 7 – Local Government Association Corporate Challenge Report and Action Plan

The Committee thanked Officers and the Peer Review Team for the work undertaken and welcomed their feedback and recommendations.

The Committee noted the importance of financial awareness for all Members and clarity on the Council's real financial position. It emphasised the importance of data in terms of managing and measuring performance of services to residents.

The Committee, as part of its remit, would be taking a role in shaping the performance data in a positive and constructive way (Appendix 2 to the report – Peer Review Action Plan, recommendation 6).

Item 5 – Corporate Strategy

The Committee had scrutinised the draft Corporate Strategy at length previously, so further scrutiny was not considered necessary. The Chair had liaised with the Leader of the Council and had informed him that he would be asking Members if they had any further comments to pass to Cabinet.

The Committee was pleased to note how performance would be measured was defined in the Strategy but looked forward to receiving the actual targets and key performance indicators (KPI's). The Committee requested more clarity on the review process because the "who, what, when and how" was unclear.

48. Carbon Emissions Data and Climate Change Measures

The Committee considered a report from the Programme Director for Climate Change which provided an update on the Council's and District's carbon emissions data for 2022/23 as part of the annual update on the Climate Change Action Programme. The report also proposed a set of measures to enable in year progress to be monitored. These measures would be used by the Senior Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders to track progress and focus on priorities. They would also be included in six-monthly reports to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the Council's carbon emissions baseline data and the updated District carbon emissions data. Appendix 2 to the report set out the proposed "in year" climate change action programme measures.

In response to questions from Members, the Programme Director for Climate Change and Councillor Davison, Leader of the Council explained that:

- A “T & D loss” was an acronym for “Transmission and Distribution Loss” (the loss of electricity as it moved through the grid).
- In respect of Scope 2 Emissions (energy indirect emissions) it was difficult to separate how much of the change was due to national energy mix versus WDC demand because depending on which periods of time were examined, slightly different conclusions could be reached on the extent to which the Council was having an impact. This was one of the reasons why the Committee had asked for the in-year measures so that it was more apparent the immediate impact the Council was having. It was possible to split out the data in future reports if the Committee wanted this.
- The report content would be re-examined in future reports to make it more apparent what the chemical formulae represented and help to understand the amounts of emissions by comparison to examples people understood in their everyday lives.
- Action by the Council to reduce emissions had not had as much effect on Scopes 1 and 2 emissions. Any savings had been through national efforts, such as wind turbines. The ambition was to see the trend reduce much faster.
- The Council did not hold any data on savings through homeworking by its employees. Another Council had tried to quantify this but had admitted that much of its calculation had been estimated. This Council could try to estimate but the figure would not be wholly reliable because there were too many unknowns. A suggestion was made that a source of material on how this could be estimated might come from a FTSE100 company.
- It was not apparent why there was such a variation year by year for water. The Programme Director would look to see if the reasons for this were apparent and report back to the Committee.
- It was hoped that the first set of available measures would be available in six months’ time for the Committee to review. It was also hoped that some of the measures would be available for managers to review on a quarterly basis.

The Chair asked the Committee Services Officer to put another update on the Work Programme (July 2024).

49. **Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from the Cabinet**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2023/24 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report as well as the comments Cabinet had made to reports the Committee had scrutinised at its meeting in August (Appendix 2 to the report) and comments Council had made at its meeting 26 September on the Resident Engagement Strategy report (Appendix 3 to the report).

In respect of the Children’s and Adults’ Safeguarding Champion position, the Chair explained that the last two attempts to appoint to the position had been unsuccessful because the two Councillors chosen subject to being appointed to Overview & Scrutiny Committee had then not been appointed to the Committee. Consequently, the Committee was still

required to appoint to the position. Councillors Barton and Collins volunteered to find out more about the role from the Head of Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment to see if they wished to volunteer. The Chair would write to all Group Leaders asking them to check with their membership if there was a member of Overview & Scrutiny Committee who would take the role. The Committee agreed for the appointment to be approved at Council 15 November rather than waiting until the next meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December.

Looking forward to work scheduled for December:

1. the HEART Shared Service update report would be considered at Cabinet so the Chair suggested that the Committee would call in the Cabinet report rather than require an additional report written for the Committee;
2. the Q2 Budget Update 2023/24 report would be automatically called in for scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda;
3. if the Digital Strategy Update report went before Cabinet in December, this would be called-in for scrutiny; and
4. the SBRR report would be automatically called in for scrutiny if it was on the Cabinet agenda as it was now part of the Committee's remit.

Councillor Armstrong gave an update on the position in respect of the net zero carbon homes. There was ongoing discussion with the Programme Director for Climate Change and whether a Task & Finish Group was appropriate. He would report back to the Committee when a conclusion had been reached.

Resolved that:

- (1) appendices 1 to 3 to the Work Programme report be noted;
- (2) the Chair would write to Group Leaders asking them to consider who amongst their *qualifying membership would volunteer to be Children's & Adults' Safeguarding Champion (**must be a member of Overview & Scrutiny Committee*); and
- (3) The Committee agreed that Council should approve the appointment of the Children's & Adults' Safeguarding Champion 23/24 at its meeting 15 November.

(The meeting ended at 8.52pm)

CHAIR
5 December 2023