

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 December 2019 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillor Davison (Chair); Councillors; Ashford, Boad, Cullinan, Evans, Margrave, Murphy, Redford and Russell.

Also Present: Councillor Grainger, Portfolio Holder – Culture, Councillor Grey (observing), Councillor Hales – Portfolio Holder – Finance, Councillor Norris – Portfolio Holder – Neighbourhood Services and Councillor Rhead – Portfolio Holder – Environment & Business.

57. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) an apology for absence was received from Councillor Kohler; and
- (b) Councillor Ashford substituted for Councillor Noone, Councillor Boad substituted for Councillor Milton, and Councillor Evans substituted for Councillor A Dearing.

58. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

59. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair reported that he had raised the issue of whether draft minutes should be circulated sooner with the Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee. He asked if any Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee had views on this but no-one felt strongly on the matter so no change was made to the current system of circulating draft minutes with the reports for the next meeting when the agenda was published.

The Chair also asked Members if they felt that the minutes taken when Executive items were scrutinised should contain more than just the comment or recommendation to the Executive. He suggested that the minutes should follow similar lines to those for the Committee's own Work Programme reports. None of the Members expressed any strong views on the matter, recognising that the Executive was the decision-making body for its reports. In the absence of clear direction on whether to continue the minutes in current form for Executive reports or to change to the minutes reflecting the main items of discussion at Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Chair suggested to trial having more detail in the minutes, and for this to start immediately.

60. **Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Wednesday 18 December 2019**

The Committee considered the following item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 18 December 2019.

Item 9 – Finance Systems Replacement

The Liberal Democrat Group had requested that this report should be scrutinised at Overview & Scrutiny Committee because it wished to understand the project interdependencies of the new finance system with other operational systems which were also being replaced (assuming that there would be inter-operational ability). Ahead of the meeting, the Liberal Democrat Group had submitted questions about the report and the Project Manager, Financial Systems had written directly to Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with answers to these questions.

Councillor Kohler, a Member of the Liberal Democrat Group, with relevant experience, had been tasked to lead the scrutiny of the report at the Committee meeting. He was unavoidably called away moments before the meeting started. Councillor Boad therefore said that without Councillor Kohler's technical experience, it would be best if Councillor Kohler followed up the specific technical questions with the officers when he was able to.

The Project Manager, Financial Systems reported that procurement of the Finance system would start in early 2020, with the Health & Community Protection system procurement starting a little later. Discussions on the Health & Community Protection system later in the week might give rise to areas within the project that might benefit from scrutiny. There was no direct conflict between the two systems. The Finance system software had an expected shelf life between four to five years, but if kept up to date, should last for 15 years before a replacement was required. The hardware would last between four to five years. There was a move to look at Cloud based systems. To keep costs under control, the Council would adapt its procedures to work with the confines of the software rather than requesting bespoke changes to make the software match the Council's procedures.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Resolved that an update on the Finance and Health & Community Protection Systems replacements be given in April (if appropriate) to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(Councillors Grey and Rhead arrived part-way through this item. Councillor Hales left at the end of this item.)

61. **Green Space Quality Audit**

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood Services following a request from the Committee when the Service Area Update had been given in September 2019 for more detail on the green space quality assessment. Members would then review the additional information to determine if this was sufficient detail for inclusion in future service area reports.

The Committee requested that the information provided in the report from 2017 – 2019 be broken down by Ward areas and circulated to Councillors now.

The Committee was content with the format of the report for future service area updates, with the addition of the information also broken down by Wards.

(Councillor Norris left the meeting.)

62. **Environment and Business Portfolio – Service Review**

The Committee considered a report which brought together details of performance relating to the Environment and Business Portfolio. The business part of this portfolio was predominantly focused on services within Development Services. Therefore, the Development Services Area Plan (and associated documents) had been used as the basis for reporting on this. However, the environment part of this portfolio cut across all services and was also a new dimension to the portfolio. This part of the portfolio was subject of the recent Executive report (November 2018). Therefore, this update concentrated mainly upon the business element of the portfolio. The reporting and governance arrangements for the environment element of the portfolio were still being established following the approval of the update on the Climate Change Emergency Action Plan at Executive.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Rhead, Portfolio Holder for Business and Environment, the Head of Development Services and the Policy and Projects Manager explained that:

- The Council had been working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and South Warwickshire Foundation Trust to progress the Cubbington Road GP surgery and the Health Centre in Lillington. There were capacity issues at the Council and within the NHS which had meant a failure to gain momentum on the projects. Meetings on the Cubbington Road surgery were imminent and progress from these would be reported to Members early in 2020. The Lillington Health Hub project would be supported by CIL money and £60,000 of that money would be used to support the NHS do the early stages of this during 2020.
- They would take on board Members' comments that there needed to be sufficient car parking at the Cubbington Road surgery when it was relocated and would inform the CCG about this Council's parking standard, which would have to be met in the planning application. Councillor Redford was concerned that people using the new surgery would have to travel there by car because there would be a lot of people who would be unable to access these facilities by public transport.
- When Leamington Spa Football Club was relocated and the new stadium built, the land vacated at Harbury Lane would become available for a Gypsy and Traveller site. There were problems identifying sites for Gypsies and Travellers because land owners were not prepared to commit land for this use. Circa 30 pitches were required so at least one additional site was required and this had to be done in the next couple of years. Conversations with other Councils and the Police had occurred to try to identify sites, but most authorities found it difficult to identify suitable locations. The issue was exacerbated by unauthorised encampments left in a bad state after the Gypsies and Travellers had moved on.
- The Council had plans to plant 168,000 trees.

(Councillor Rhead left the meeting.)

63. **Update in Council's Brexit Preparations**

The Council considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and the Head of Health & Community Protection which gave an update on a review officers had undertaken on the potential Brexit implications for Warwick District Council, focusing specifically on a "No Deal" Brexit. This was not an indication of the Council's anticipated outcome of the Brexit situation. At the point in time when the report was written, the Prime Minister had reached an agreement with the EU, but this had not yet been ratified by Parliament. The report was a reflection of prudence in planning, because this was the scenario with the most variables.

In response to questions from Members, the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and Councillor Grainger, Portfolio Holder – Culture explained that:

- The expected outcome of Brexit was that the Withdrawal Agreement would go through at the end of January 2020; a "no deal" scenario would arise if trade agreements could not be ratified by the end of the 12-month transition period.
- The Head of Health & Community Protection was the lead officer for keeping the Action Plan updated.
- An updated report would be presented to the Committee in four months' time when there had been opportunity to review it in light of the December 2019 General Election.
- It was felt that by July 2020, the country would know the shape any possible trade agreements would take. The next update in four months' time should account for "with and without a trade deal scenario".
- The relocation of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) was not caused by Brexit; it was more centred on global issues, such as the decline in the Chinese market. The Council was not receiving any indicators from the CWLEP about businesses that might be forced to leave the area simply as a result of Brexit.
- EU citizens who were having difficulty applying for settled status would find help on the Council's website on sources of information.

Resolved that an update report be brought to the meeting in April which should focus on:

- (1) monitoring "red" risk areas; and
- (2) the people side – EU citizens/nationals facing hate crimes and entitlement to settled status.

(Councillor Grainger left the meeting.)

64. **Review of Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report from Health & Community Protection which summarised the review and the achievements of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee during 2018/19 and provided information to aid

the discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the future of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Councillor Redford, Chair of the Sub-Committee, informed Members that the Sub-Committee focussed primarily on work this Council did to improve health and wellbeing of its residents and Council staff. She requested that the Sub-Committee be allowed to continue in its present form for another 12 months because its membership was new to health scrutiny and it took a while for the work to bed in. She also raised concerns that if the work of the Sub-Committee was returned into the main Committee, then already long meetings would only get longer and it was possible that not enough focus would be given to health and wellbeing.

Councillor Redford pointed out that a lot of work had been done to make Council buildings "breast-feeding friendly" although measurement of the success of this was very difficult to measure by virtue of its private nature.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members suggested that the Sub-Committee should consider how the Council could help with the problem of social isolation. Was there scope for funding community grants, for example?

Resolved that:

- (1) in light of the ongoing Governance Review of the democratic structure of the Council, the work of the Sub-Committee will continue for a further 12 months and its role and remit will be considered as part of the wider Governance review; and
- (2) the work of the Sub-Committee and the Council against the Health and Wellbeing approach since the start of the 2018/19 municipal year be noted.

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

The Committee considered its work programme for 2019-2020, the Forward Plan and the response from the Executive to its comments in November.

The Committee agreed to amend its Work Programme as follows so that at the meeting in February, it could concentrate on scrutinising the report going to the Executive on the Climate Emergency:

- (1) 11 February 2020 meeting:
 - the Committee postponed certain reports scheduled for the February meeting to the March meeting. These reports were the Fuel Poverty report and the toilets for people living with disability report; and
 - Members were asked to review the website pages for night noise and inform the Committee Services Officer if they wished to discuss this at the February meeting;

- (2) 17 March 2020 meeting:
 - the annual update from Shakespeare's England – the Committee did not want a presentation, but required a written report and would feed back any comments it had at the meeting; and
- (3) TBA:
 - the Asset Management Strategy report could be removed from the Work Programme.

Resolved that

- (1) the Comments from the Executive report attached as Appendix 2 to the report, be noted;
- (2) the following reports currently scheduled for February 2020 be postponed to March 2020:
 - (a) Fuel Poverty; and
 - (b) Improvement to accessibility and cleanliness of the toilets for people living with disability;
- (3) The Shakespeare's England update scheduled for March 2020 should consist only of a report and Members will feed back any comments at the meeting. A presentation is not required; and
- (4) Members to notify the Committee Services Officer if they wish the Night Noise website pages to be discussed at the February meeting. If not, this item can be removed from the Work Programme.

(The meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

CHAIR
11 February 2020