

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2019 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

**Present:** Councillor Davison (Chair); Councillors; Ashford, Boad, Cullinan, A Dearing, Kohler, Margrave, Milton, Murphy, and Redford.

**Also Present:** Councillor Day, Leader of the Council, Councillor Falp, Portfolio Holder – Health & Community Protection, Councillor Matecki – Portfolio Holder for Housing Services and Councillor Cooke – Portfolio Holder for Development.

## 48. **Apologies and Substitutes**

Councillor Ashford substituted for Councillor Noone.

## 49. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute 52 - Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Wednesday 13 November 2019 - Item 11. Creative Quarter – Conclusion of Phase 1 and next steps

During the item Councillor Boad declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Creative Quarter because he was a Royal Leamington Spa Town Council and received an allowance from it.

## 50. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 51. **Development Portfolio – Service Review**

The Committee received a briefing from the Development Services Portfolio Holder outlining the current performance and challenges for the Service Area.

Councillor Cooke provided a short overview of the Service Area outlining the key challenges that had been presented with staff shortages within Development Control due to a competitive market with limited resources available. He also explained that there was a planned increase in the staffing within the Enforcement Team due to the significant increase in the number of cases.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Portfolio Holder explained that:

- the average response time for determination of applications was between 56 and 61 days;
- it was important to recognise there were separate legislative considerations for the licensing and planning regimes and this could result in different restrictions on a building;
- the extra resources being brought into the team would focus on reviewing all HMO premises;

- there was a significant volume of cases within the Enforcement Team and each case was being assessed in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy before appropriate action was taken;
- pre-application advice was always provided on the understanding that it was advice on what needed to be included when an application was submitted and not a formal decision;
- pre-application advice also enabled the applicant to test the water if they were wasting their time by submitting the application;
- Community Safety was being designed into the built environment by virtue of making areas open and providing overlooking of public open spaces; and
- trees subject to Tree Protection Orders would be considered for works or removal where there were clear health issues with the tree.

52. **Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Wednesday 13 November 2019**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 13 November 2019.

Item 9 - Further technical work relating to Land East of Kenilworth Development

The Committee supported the recommendations. With the support of the Portfolio Holder, the Committee asked that when the additional highway study was completed if the view of the Head of Development Service was that further public consultation was not required, this should be a matter that the Executive took to enable public scrutiny of the decision.

(With the permission of the Chair, Mr E Kirwan had addressed the Committee on this item.)

Item 12 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – Request to Consult

The Committee noted the report.

Item 3 - Housing Services Redesign – Additional Budget Requirement

The Committee noted the report and agreed that their monitoring of service benefit would be via the annual Portfolio Holder report to the Scrutiny Committee.

Item 7 - Climate Change Emergency Action Plan Update

The Committee welcomed the report on the initial work, the steps being taken and the proposed action plan. The Committee asked the Executive to arrange a presentation to all Councillors on the work being undertaken and proposed when the action plan came forward.

Item 11 - Creative Quarter – Conclusion of Phase 1 and next steps

The Committee unanimously supported the recommendations in the report.

(With the permission of the Chair, Mr A Heap had addressed the Committee on this item.)

53. **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 item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

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

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

The report set out the Annual Performance figures particularly in relation to violence and anti-social behaviour.

The national recording standard changed fundamentally in 2015/16. The impact of this and changes to violent crime categories had led to an increase in recorded violent crime. Violence with injury was up but the greatest impact was on Violence without Injury.

In April 2018 the Violence Without Injury category was amended so that certain offences could be recorded in addition to the most serious offence. The recording rules allowed the recording of either a harassment, stalking, coercive behaviour or modern slavery offence in addition to the most serious offence. This was a significant change to recording practices because normally only the most serious offence disclosed would be recorded. Particularly during risk assessments for domestic violence victims, these additional offences tended to be disclosed on top of more serious physical assaults. They were now being recorded separately.

The number of anti-social behaviour incidents was at its lowest level since the Council started recording in 1998. The figure for 2018/19 for this District was 3,522 incidents and for the first six months there was a further reduction of 20%. Appendix 5 to the report showed the figures and trend line for a ten-year period.

The number of incidents was an important indicator but the figures for qualitative response was more impressive. The figures for the period 1/10/18 – 30/09/19 showed an 89% success for moderating behaviour at first intervention (no further incidents in six months).

During this period there were 80 new high risk or repeat caller cases. It had not been possible to reduce three cases, one was carried over from

the previous year, two of the three moved. One was ongoing. Allowing for these three our success rate was 96%.

In response to questions from the Committee the Portfolio Holder and Safer Communities Manager explained that:

- the report was confidential because the Q2 performance for 2019/20 had been shared with partners;
- rural crime was proportionate to the size of rural area within the District;
- the importance was to recognise that it was crime in a rural area and not rural crime;
- the crime in a rural area was greater in number in Stratford District because it had a larger rural area;
- the information was available Ward by Ward and was used to feed into overall strategy and look at cross cutting issues;
- the Council's ASB Officer worked with Warwickshire Police to identify the individuals involved and challenge their behaviour;
- there was a trend in increasing violent crime, both with and without sustaining injury and this would be a priority area to be tackled;
- the information was not mapped on the current Wards, as they had only changed in May 2019 but the data would be updated to reflect the new Wards going forward;
- the fear of crime had gone down and this had led to the public taking their eye off the ball in terms of leaving valuable items in cars on display, which had resulted in thefts from cars increasing;
- there were new standards for reporting crimes and Warwickshire was excelling at the accuracy and standard of recoding where as other authorities were not. Therefore, at this time it was hard to compare performance with other authorities;
- the CCTV scheme operated by the Council was a vital tool for the prevention of crime and catching criminals within the District;
- the new CCTV system was being delivered on time and would provide an annual saving of £50,000 per annum; and
- the new cameras within the system were more agile and therefore could be deployed at hotspots, based on evidence, to target specific local problems.

**55. Confidential appendix to Item 6 above - Comments from the Executive**

The Committee considered the responses from the Executive in October to the comments they had made on the reports considered by the Executive.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

**56. 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 September.

**Resolved** that

- (1) the Brexit report should be brought to the Committee in December as per the Work Programme;
- (2) the Committee will specifically look at the impact of the Housing Services redesign, a part of the Portfolio Holder Service Review Report; and
- (3) the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.53 pm)

CHAIR  
17 December 2019