

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 December 2021 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors Ashford, Cullinan, A Dearing, J Dearing, Jacques, Kohler, Margrave, Redford and Russell.

Also Present: Councillors Bartlett – Portfolio Holder, Culture, Tourism & Leisure, Day – Leader of the Council, and Hales – Portfolio Holder, Transformation & Resources.

39. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) There were no apologies for absence made.
- (b) Councillor Ashford substituted for Councillor Morris.

40. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

41. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 November 2021 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

42. **Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 9 December 2021**

The Committee considered the following item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet on Thursday 9 December 2021.

Item 4 – Proposal to create a South Warwickshire District Council

The Chairman thanked officers for the work they had done on the merger.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting discussed the report using the themes that the Scrutiny Chairs had established at the outset of the process. Five main themes were identified:

1. Consultation
2. Services
3. Climate Emergency
4. Democratic Representation
5. Finance & Risk

Overview & Scrutiny would focus on themes (1) to (4). At the meeting each theme was discussed in turn and any comments and recommendations made at the end of discussion of each theme.

Consultation:

The Committee asked that where issues had been raised by residents, there should be a summary of the issues raised and drilled down to provide the split between Councils. It also requested that the way that information was given to residents, should both Councils agree to merge on 13 December, be strengthened so that residents are clear about the aims and objectives of the new Council. There should be an ongoing communications plan. It requested that stakeholder submissions should be circulated to all Councillors ahead of 13 December.

It recommended to Cabinet that a clearer statistical summary of the evidence base should be published providing clarity upfront on the differences between results in respect of the Residents' Telephone Survey and the Open Consultation Questionnaire and how these evidence bases would be used to shape the future strategy.

Services:

The Committee noted the importance of communication with residents and how the council engages with them as Services develop.

The Committee made two recommendations to Cabinet:

1. There should be Councillor engagement when developing the Service Area Plans, this should include involvement in metrics and how measures would be set. (Councillors would not be involved in deciding the mechanism for providing this.)
2. More information should be provided on how to treat the risk logs (the Deloitte Risk Register and the Programme Risk Register devised by officers) and the relationship between the two, after it had been explained that the differences were a result of the timings when the Risk Registers had been prepared, with Deloitte's being at the very start of the process.

Climate Emergency:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not make any comments or recommendations in respect of Climate Emergency.

Democratic Representation:

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that:

1. It should be made clear that the Council would work with all parish and town councils in the District, not just those which were members of the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC).
2. The implications of reference to the "Quality Parish" mark (Item 4/Appendix 10/Page 4 in the agenda papers or page 6 in the actual document) should be reviewed because it was too restrictive. Councillors expressed their scepticism about the advantages being a "Quality Parish" Council might bring.
3. The Shadow Council, should, as one of the first things it focussed on, create a framework for how parish and town councils would be supported and how this Council would engage with them with a view to looking at how powers might be devolved to them in the future where there was interest in so doing.

(At 7.53pm the meeting was adjourned for a comfort break. It reconvened at 8.02pm. Councillor Day did not return to the meeting and Councillor Hales returned shortly after the next item had started.)

Item 10 – Outdoor Sports Review – Proposed Revised Delivery Models for Council Owned Facilities

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is keen for basketball facilities to be provided across the District.

It recommended to Cabinet that as part of the contract, free time provision should be made available at a variety of times during the week and that the provider encouraged a wider demographic of people to use the facilities.

Item 9 – Developing a Digital Strategy for South Warwickshire

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted both the report and the importance to consider residents and businesses with the design as it is taken forward.

It recommended to Cabinet that:

1. A briefing should be provided to all Councillors because of the wide-ranging impact of the Strategy.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should hold a dedicated session on the Digital Strategy to scrutinise the Strategy in more depth and to look at the finer detail.
3. The lessons learned from the Finance System Project and Member involvement in the project should be incorporated into the work to be done for the Digital Strategy.

43. **Review of the Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from the Cabinet**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2022 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chairman asked Members to email any suggestions for items for the Work Programme to Committee Services. He drew Members' attention to paragraphs 1.14 to 1.16 in the report.

Resolved that

- (1) appendices 1 and 2 to the Work Programme report be noted;
- (2) in respect of Recommendation 4 in the report, the review of the Council's democratic structure be deferred until the future of the Council is known (recommendation 4b); and

- (3) the update from the Equalities Task & Finish Group as set out in paragraph 1.16 be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.53pm)

CHAIR
8 February 2022