

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 6.00pm, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

Present: Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors; Cullinan, Davison, A Dearing (late arrival), Jacques, Kohler, Noone, Norris, Russell and Wright.

Also Present: Councillors Cooke and Grainger.

16. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) An apology for absence was received from Councillor Margrave.
- (b) Councillor Wright substituted for Councillor Redford.

17. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

18. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 August 2020 and of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 February 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19. **Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 1 October 2020**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Thursday 1 October 2020.

Item 4 – Joint Local Plan Review

The Committee felt that a clear distinction was required to make it apparent that the working party was not a scrutiny function. It also felt that the term "Programme Advisory Board" should be avoided because of the very specific meaning it had at Warwick District Council and the confusion that could arise.

It was noted that concerns raised about the potential impact of the Local Government review and on potential differing needs for affordable and other housing allocations would be addressed through the proposed officer work and Member review.

(Councillor A Dearing joined the meeting part-way through discussions on this item. Councillor Cooke left at the end of this item.)

Item 5 – Trees for our Future – Project Framework and Start-up

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for their work and welcomed this initial plan which was felt to be a good foundation to determine the final plan details. It looked forward to information on the

both the final number of trees and the amount of woodland established. The community involvement was noted as a very positive aspect of the project.

(Councillor Grainger left the meeting at the end of discussions on this item.)

20. **Task & Finish Group – Equality & Diversity**

The Committee received a verbal update on progress from Councillor Noone, a Member of the Task & Finish Group. She referred Members to the written statement that had been sent out by Councillor Mangat, the Chair of the Task & Finish Group.

Councillor Noone informed Members that the Group had met four times and those meetings had been more of an exploratory nature during which they had gathered information. More meetings were scheduled and the Committee would be updated as progress was made.

Members asked that in light of difficulties faced with contacting outside organisations during the pandemic, the Group should consider setting out short-term and long-term timelines and that matters internal to the Council itself could be pushed forward during this period to end with a formal review quite quickly. This would allow some actions to be taken soon.

Councillor Noone explained that this was not so straightforward because there was a lot of information to gather and questions to ask before the Group would have an idea of where changes might be needed or improvements could be made within the Council. These were complex matters that would take time and she impressed upon Members the amount of work that was being done and the time commitment being made by the members of the Group.

The Chair asked Councillor Noone to ask the Group to consider how tangible differences within the Council could be made as quickly as possible. It was recognised that issues outside of the Council might take more time. A timeline was requested for the work to be done.

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

The Committee considered its work programme for 2020-2021, the Forward Plan and the response from the Executive to its comments in August.

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) explained that the two reports from Neighbourhood Services that were scheduled for delivery at the meeting could not be delivered due to recent staffing changes within the department; one of those changes being the Head of Service who was now performing a shared post with Stratford District Council which meant 50% of time on Stratford District Council's work and 50% on Warwick District Council's work. Additionally, two service managers had also left Warwick District Council so the Service Area had to prioritise frontline services during this period. He would discuss with the Head of Service when the reports could be delivered.

The Shakespeare's England annual update had been postponed until March 2021 following agreement between the Chair and the Portfolio Holder so that it would include performance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were then asked to consider the Forward Plan to see if there were any topics that they might wish to scrutinise.

Councillor Russell suggested that the Newbold Comyn – Final Master Plan and Funding Strategy (Ref 1,144) might be a topic for scrutiny and the Chair asked him to liaise with officers in order to find out more about the project on behalf of the Committee.

Members suggested that night noise might be something that required scrutiny given extenuating circumstances caused by the pandemic; issues such as the closure of pubs at 10pm were mentioned. Councillor Davison highlighted the fact that some actions, such as home visits, were not being performed currently because of the pandemic and suggested that the Committee might consider looking at which services were no longer being performed or constrained because of the pandemic. The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) reminded Members that a Task & Finish Group would be dealing with the pandemic-related changes and questioned whether work was being duplicated. The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) was asked to raise the issue with the relevant Head of Service for an update to be sent out to the Committee on the current position regarding night noise.

The Chair reported that the Terms of Reference for the Step Back Review had been broadly approved and a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

Appendix 4 to the Work Programme report gave an update on the position in respect of fees and charges for pest control. The charges had not yet been introduced and the Appendix explained what was being planned.

Resolved that

- (1) the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) is to:
 - a. liaise with the Head of Neighbourhood Services to determine when the Shared Environmental Enforcement report and the update on plans to improve accessibility to toilets for people living with disabilities can be delivered; and
 - b. ask the Head of Health & Community Protection to send an update to all Committee Members on the current position regarding night noise;
- (2) the Step-Back Review be added to the Work Programme with a report coming forward to the next meeting; and
- (3) Appendix 2 to the report, Comments from the Executive, be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.20pm)

CHAIR
10 November 2020