

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 19 JUNE 2017 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.20 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Shahid Younis (Chairman), Bill Soane (Vice-Chairman), Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, David Sleight and Ian Pittock

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Dianne King, Chris Bowring, Michael Firmager and Norman Jorgensen

Officers Present

Arabella Yandle (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Paul Feven (Assistant Director of People Commissioning (Interim)), Matt Gould (Service Manager, Transport & Road Safety) and Edward Napper (Drainage Maintenance Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest in item 9 was submitted from Councillor David Sleight on the basis that he was a Member of the Parking Working Group.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

6. PRINCIPLES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Arabella Yandle, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist presented a paper on the principles of overview and scrutiny. The paper outlined the benefits to the community of a rigorous approach to overview and scrutiny, citing good and bad examples and suggesting a range of stakeholders to approach for input. It was designed to stimulate a conversation about checks and balances, a topic that was particularly pertinent in the week following the fire at Grenfell Tower.

During the discussion of the item, the following points were made:

- The quality of scrutiny depended on the timeliness and quality of information provided;
- Members needed time to digest the contents of reports so reports should be published with the agenda. Verbal reports alone would not be accepted. Items that did not include reports should not be discussed;
- Ideally, items should come to overview and scrutiny committees prior to being adopted/finalised so that the committees could inform the process;

- Different approaches to increasing the contribution of a range of stakeholders should be considered, including the potential of holding themed evenings and inviting key stakeholders to contribute;
- It would be valuable to gain knowledge of overview and scrutiny by attending overview and scrutiny meetings in other boroughs. The value of this could then be fed back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;
- Holding Chairman's Briefings to look at draft reports prior to the publication of the agenda allowed the opportunity to make sure the reports were fit for purpose, and
- To increase the involvement of all the Members of the Committee, Members would be invited to submit questions and issues to the Chair two weeks after a meeting. These would be passed to the officers to ensure their inclusion in the reports.

Resolved: That

1. Neil Carr, Scrutiny Officer, investigate and advise on good practice in overview and scrutiny meetings in other boroughs that Members could attend prior to the next Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Meeting;
2. A recommendation be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee relating to late items and, if approved, be submitted to the Constitutional Working Group for consideration, and
3. Members of the Committee consider items in the Forward Plan and submit any questions or issues to the Chair within two weeks of the meeting for inclusion in reports.

7. REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Arabella Yandle, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist, delivered a brief summary of the history of the Committee's interest in the voluntary sector and outside bodies.

Paul Feven, Assistant Director of People Commissioning, then presented the report, outlining the intention behind the Strategic Review of voluntary sector services and the work that had been carried out on it to date. The focus was to ascertain which services were being provided; how they were being delivered and determine the means by which they would be evaluated in future (i.e. clear required outcomes for service users). On the whole this would also involve moving from short term grant funding to longer term contracts, providing more security for providers. The review will also improve the service to the residents by attaching KPIs to the services they were provided with whilst assisting the voluntary sector in their medium to long term planning. He explained that the report had gone to Executive in January and that it was a work in progress.

In response to Member questions, it was clarified what was meant by outside bodies and the voluntary sector, explaining that the two overlapped in that some of the outside bodies that the Council had representation on were also providers. The work that was covered by the report related to any organisation that provided a service that had been commissioned by the People Directorate, commissioning being the assessment of a need and how to meet it. This is as opposed to procurement, which is the process of purchasing.

The Assistant Director of People Commissioning went on to explain how the new process would be streamlined to remove areas of service duplication. Providers would only be asked to provide necessary information that added value to the review process.

During the discussion of the item, the following points were made:

- Ward Members were frequently asked questions by residents that they could not answer as they were not kept up to speed with changes;
- A process should be put in place to advise and assist charities whose funding was not going to continue;
- Users of services and service providers should be invited to take part in overview and scrutiny as part of ensuring quality provision and rigorous overview and scrutiny;
- In the pursuit of transparency, details of grants, funding and other payments received by outside bodies and the voluntary sector should be posted on the internet, and
- The Review needed to be expanded to include Place.

Resolved: That

1. For the Assistant Director for Place Commissioning to deliver an update on the Review at the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 4 September 2017;
2. The invitation be extended to the Assistant Director of Place Commissioning so that she might report on how the review could be extended to the Place Directorate;
3. The Directorates open and maintain communication pathways with Ward Members to keep them informed about items that affect their wards, and
4. Officers investigate the feasibility of posting a page on the internet listing organisations and the funding they receive.

8. FLOOD RISK UPDATE

Eddie Napper, Drainage Maintenance Manager, delivered an update on Flood Risk in the Borough on behalf of Francesca Hobson, Flood Risk Manager, outlining the progress made with the Lead Local Flood Authority's duties during 2016-17.

In response to Member questions, he outlined the process needed to assess an asset and enter it on to the asset register, which would be accessible on line for both staff and residents. In relation to Land Drainage Byelaws, he stated that there were powers to force a landowner to maintain a Land Drain and that these would be enhanced under Wokingham specific byelaws that included, among other things, a restriction on building within 8m of the top of a bank, a rule that would be upheld under Planning regulations.

He went on to state that a new company had been awarded the contract for Gully Cleansing and outlined how the company worked with technology to provide up to date and accurate data that would be readily accessible when dealing with a resident query.

In response to a Member question regarding Flood Wardens, he explained the value of local knowledge of residents in reporting river and stream levels. Ward Members and Parishes would be informed who they were and the areas they covered.

Resolved: That

1. Ward Members and Parish Councils be informed as to who the Flood Wardens were and which areas they covered, and

2. The Flood Risk Manager review the online content of the asset register and inform the Committee as to when it will become available.

9. CAR PARK PRICING

(Councillor David Sleight declared a personal interest)

Matthew Gould, Service Manager, Transport & Road Safety, delivered an update from the Parking Working Group, outlining the benefit to residents of the changes in the Council's parking strategy.

In response to Member questions regarding school drop offs, the Service Manager, Transport & Road Safety, confirmed that the item on school gate parking would include 'kiss and go' drop offs. He stated that the issue of school dropping off points and additional parking would be considered as part of the new strategy.

In regards to the road restrictions on Peach Street (that had recently come to an end) and other concerns around illegal parking, he suggested that the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), which was due to come on board in the near future, would allow the Council to pursue illegal parking aggressively and that a lot of the existing issues would be resolved disappear. He also stated that CPE would help to address some of the issues regarding lorries and other vehicles blocking roads where they are contravening parking restrictions.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme for September was reviewed and the following points were made:

- As per the resolutions in item 6, Members of the Committee should submit any questions or issues around the items on the agenda in September to the Chair by week commencing 3 July 2017 for referral to officers for inclusion in their reports;
- As per the resolutions in item 7, the two Heads of Strategic Commissioning be invited to attend the September meeting to deliver updates on the review of voluntary sector;
- The item on Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration be postponed to November;
- Alex Deans be asked to include issues on the work on the A329M in his update, and
- David Wilby be asked to include how the work on the Reading Road is being managed in his update on cycling lanes.

The Work Programme for November was reviewed and the following points were made:

The item on the 21st Century Council should be postponed until January 2018 at the earliest, but the Committee felt that, as such an important issue, it was important that all aspects of overview and scrutiny be given enough time to examine its impact. If it was to be merged into one meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, the Members of all other overview and scrutiny committees should be invited to attend.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be noted and the changes outlined above be actioned.