

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.55 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Jenny Cheng, Andy Croy, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Emma Hobbs

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Laura Callan, Strategy & Commissioning Support Manager
Rhian Hayes, Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place

30. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Pauline Helliard-Symons and Oliver Whittle.

Emma Hobbs attended the meeting as a substitute.

31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 July 2020 and the Call-In meeting held on 26 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

Note: Members sought an update on actions agreed at the meeting on 22 July 2020, as follows:

Minute 18: Unauthorised Encampments

- Member training session to be delivered in August 2020;
- Proposed business case for any future traveller transit sites;
- Updated information on unauthorised encampments on the Council's website;
- Public leaflet on unauthorised encampments.

32. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

34. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

35. CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASK & FINISH GROUP - REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group set out at Agenda pages 23 to 50.

Alison Swaddle, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the report and outlined the work of the Group over the past five months in scrutinising the Council's

Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Group had interviewed the Executive Member and a number of Officers in addition to external experts.

The Group's overall conclusion was that the Action Plan was an ambitious document underpinned by a significant budget and a clear governance structure. The Action Plan was in line with best practice across the country. However, there were a number of areas where more work was required to strengthen the Action Plan and to ensure that the governance structure delivered rigorous challenge and effective scrutiny.

The Task and Finish Group report contained 13 recommendations as follows:

- 1) That the Council work with schools, businesses and community stakeholders to develop a Vision for a Net Zero Borough, with indicators and milestones to demonstrate progress;
- 2) That the annual progress report on the Climate Emergency Action Plan include recognition of the levels of non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough and progress achieved in delivering reductions through the sequestration measures in place;
- 3) That the Council's key decision reports include a section on Climate Emergency to ensure that the issue is mainstreamed into the decision making process. This must include a transparent, calculated carbon impact assessment of the proposal rather than a generic comment such as "in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan";
- 4) That, as part of the 2021 progress report on the Action Plan, the Council commission an independent carbon accounting audit of the Action Plan's targets, methodology and underlying assumptions;
- 5) That the six monthly update of the Action Plan, in January 2021, address the gaps and errors in the current version;
- 6) That the annual update report on the Action Plan include estimates of consumption emissions, progress of measures aimed at increasing awareness of these emissions and individual responsibilities such as the promotion of local sustainable sourcing options for food, goods and services;
- 7) That future iterations of the Action Plan set out SMART targets to reduce car usage, thereby tackling traffic congestion, and demonstrate how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, bus and rail operators to deliver transport solutions and a transport network and infrastructure which focuses on active travel and public transport;
- 8) That a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, setting out the business case for the Green Bank Project, including an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the viability of the project;
- 9) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee scrutinise the impact of the Local Plan Update on the Climate Emergency as part of its review of the new Local Plan later in 2020/21;

10) That the Council establish and publish details of the amount of land available for sequestration and renewable energy projects by surveying the Borough, in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils, to identify opportunities for tree planting, solar farms and other green projects;

11) That the annual update report on the Action Plan:

- Emphasise the relative significance of WBC's organisational footprint in any discussion of WBC's estate and facilities;
- Provide details of progress on the Council's journey to becoming a Net Zero organisation, including investment, procurement and supply chains;
- Outline the measures taken to protect individuals, families and groups most at risk from the impact of climate change and provide details of the outcomes;
- Include a risk register, setting out the major risks (including the impact of third party action and non-action);
- Include an assessment methodology which measures the likelihood (as a %) of success or failure for each item;

12) That, in light of the increasing number and complexity of initiatives aimed at tackling the Climate Emergency, consideration be given to strengthening the in-house team, especially in relation to "number crunching" of carbon reductions and project costs;

13) That the Action Plan recognises the important role played by Towns and Parishes across the Borough in moving to Net Zero and commits to working in meaningful partnership to develop and support local initiatives which turn new ideas into positive action on the ground.

The Committee considered the detailed recommendations and commented as follows:

Could the proposed Vision for Net Zero be given greater prominence in the Council's Community Vision for Wokingham Borough, agreed in February 2020? Rhian Hayes commented that this suggestion would be considered by Officers.

The report highlighted the importance of behaviour change in delivering carbon reductions. What steps were being taken to encourage behaviour change amongst residents? Rhian commented that Officers were considering the potential for a Citizens Assembly in order to increase awareness and engage with residents.

Could the report's recommendations be amended to include reference to the fact that implementation of the Action Plan should not have any detrimental impact on other environmental issues such as air pollution. As an example, the burning of biomass can impact on air quality. The Committee felt that a new recommendation should be introduced as follows:

"That implementation of the Action Plan be monitored to ensure that any actions did not have a detrimental impact on other environmental issues such as air quality".

Whilst the Climate Emergency Action Plan contained a significant number of projects, Members felt that it would benefit from some more definitive timescales and milestones. The Committee felt that the second bullet point in current Recommendation 11 in the report should be amended to read:

“Provide details of progress on the Council’s journey to becoming a Net Zero organisation, including **timelines for key activities and progress** relating to investment, procurement and supply chains”.

In relation to Recommendation 3 in the report, Members felt the wording should be amended to emphasise that the impact of climate change should be considered in all the Council’s activities. The Committee felt that current Recommendation 3 should be amended to read:

That the Council **consider the impact of climate change on all its actions with** key decision reports including a section on Climate Emergency to ensure that the issue is mainstreamed into the decision making process. This must include a transparent, calculated carbon impact assessment of the proposal rather than a generic comment such as “in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan”.

Members felt that Recommendation 7 in the report would be strengthened by the inclusion of reference to “community stakeholders” in the list of partners to be engaged with. The Committee felt that current Recommendation 7 in the report should be amended to read:

“That future iterations of the Action Plan set out SMART targets to reduce car usage, thereby tackling traffic congestion, and demonstrate how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, bus and rail operators **and other community stakeholders** to deliver transport solutions and a transport network and infrastructure which focuses on active travel and public transport”.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group report, as amended, be submitted to the Executive for consideration at its meeting in October 2020;
- 2) any feedback from the Executive on the Task and Finish Group report be submitted to the Committee in due course.

36. FUTURE SCRUTINY OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 51 to 54, which considered potential options for the future Scrutiny of the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The report followed on from the discussion about the report of the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group. As Climate Emergency would be a major issues for the Borough’s residents for many years to come, the report considered options for future Scrutiny.

The report set out three options for future Scrutiny of the Action Plan, as follows:

Option 1 – establish an additional Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

Option 2 – maintain the current Overview and Scrutiny structure and scrutinise the Action Plan through regular reports;

Option 3 – maintain or refresh the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group.

Members considered the pros and cons of the three options.

Sarah Kerr notified Members that the LGA was running Climate Emergency webinars on 17/18 September which may provide further insights for the Scrutiny process.

It was proposed by Guy Grandison and seconded by Emma Hobbs that Option 3 – maintaining/refreshing the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group, be approved by the Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was approved.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) future Scrutiny of the Climate Emergency Action Plan be carried out by the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group;
- 2) feedback from the LGA Climate Emergency webinars be fed into the Scrutiny process;
- 3) the future Scrutiny process be considered again following the next report of the Task and Finish Group.

37. PROGRESS UPDATE ON PROPOSED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2020/21 AND Q1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 55 to 78, which gave details of progress on the development of the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21. The report also gave details of performance during Quarter 1 of the 2020/21 Municipal Year (April to June).

Laura Callan introduced the report and answered Member questions.

Laura began by referring Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' review of the Council's response to the pandemic. Laura confirmed that a report on the impact of then pandemic on poverty in the Borough would be submitted to the October meeting of the Committee. Laura outlined the range of evidence that would be used to inform the report, including deprivation and poverty data, unemployment statistics, intervention points across the Council and a summary of contact with the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Laura confirmed that Simon Price (Housing) and Jake Morrison (CAB) would be invited to attend the meeting of the Committee on 21 October 2020.

The Q1 Performance Report indicated that, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had continued to play a significant role in supporting individuals and businesses by providing help and support, whilst continuing to maintain essential services.

The report stated that the KPIs for Q1 demonstrated improvements in a number of areas with seven KPIs moving from Amber to Green, one KPI moving from Red to Amber and one KPI moving from Red to Green. A number of KPIs had deteriorated but this was

largely due to the impact of the pandemic, for example through the closure of premises such as libraries.

In order to align performance management with the new Community Vision, the report stated that 60 KPIs were intended to be monitored during 2020/21. 36 of these KPIs (monitored during 2019/20) were already well aligned with the Vision. In addition, 24 new KPIs were proposed in order to ensure that all the strategic themes in the Vision were covered. The Committee would receive an update once the new KPIs were finalised.

The Committee considered the individual indicators set out in the report and made the following comments:

Appendix A – Key Performance Indicators 2020/21 Summary and Detail (Page 65 of the Agenda) contained a great deal of information and, as a result, used a small font size. Could this Appendix be presented in a different format using a more suitable font size? Laura Callan agreed to look into this issue.

The previous list of indicators include KPIs looking at customer satisfaction and officer feedback relating to WBC processes. Were these indicators being retained? Laura confirmed that consideration was being given to customer satisfaction KPIs and the linkages to staff/resource impacts in relation to on-line services.

In relation to the eight Adult Social care KPIs that were being removed (Page 57 of the Agenda) when would replacement KPIs be in place to ensure that there were no gaps in performance monitoring? Laura confirmed that the service would be contacted to provide an update on the development of new KPIs.

The target for KPI CS2 (child protection visits) had been changed from 90% to 80%. What was the reason for this change? Laura reported that the target had been changed in order to make it SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). The service still had an internal target of 90% but felt that 80% was a more realistic SMART target for public reporting.

Some KPIs had clearly been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, e.g. physical visits to libraries. Was consideration being given to changes arising out of the pandemic such as lower physical visits offset by more virtual visits? Laura confirmed that indicators impacted by the pandemic were being reviewed in order to understand how services were changing and what appropriate measures could be considered.

Were there plans to introduce a KPI relating to air pollution? Laura confirmed that this was being considered, although it may be an annual indicator.

In relation to KPI PG 17 (satisfaction with highways in the Borough), the RAG rating was “Green if more than the previous year”. Could the criteria underpinning the RAG rating be reviewed to enable more assessment of areas of concern? Laura confirmed that this would be discussed with the service.

KPI RA2 (occupancy rate for WBC owned regeneration units) – the RAG rating indicated that this should be reported as Amber not Green.

KPI PG6 (affordable housing completions) – could the indicator show affordable housing as a % of all housing built? Laura stated that this suggestion would be discussed with the service.

Which KPIs were likely to be impacted by the pandemic and the potential second wave? Laura commented that this issue would feed into the discussions about the Council's recovery plans, to be discussed with the Chief Executive at the meeting on 21 October.

KPIs 22, 24 and 25 (carbon footprint, emissions and off-setting) – could these PIs be clarified? The PIs would be more useful if they indicated the amount of carbon emissions reduced/prevented as a result of the implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. The KPIs needed to be durable to ensure consistent monitoring of progress towards Net Zero by 2030. Laura confirmed that these points would be discussed with the relevant Officers.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Laura Callan be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) progress on the development of new KPIs to reflect the new Community Vision be noted;
- 3) the Performance Monitoring Report for Q1 2020/21 be noted;
- 4) further information be circulated to Members in response to the specific points raised at the meeting;
- 5) specific issues relating to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Council performance be considered at the next meeting of the Committee in discussion with the Chief Executive.

38. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND IEMD FORWARD PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and the Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 79 to 84.

Members raised the following points:

- Fees and Charges would be considered as part of the Community and Corporate Committee's review of the Budget.
- An update on the Council's Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan was requested for the October meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Executive and Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programmes be noted.

39. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its forward Work Programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out on Agenda pages 85 to 98.

During the discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Guy Grandison reported that the Community and Corporate O&S Committee was reviewing various aspects of the Council's response to Covid-19 and would shortly be commencing scrutiny of the Budget process for 2021/22.
- Ken Miall reported that HOSC had held a briefing on the Council's support for care homes during the pandemic. Andy Croy expressed concern that Labour Members had not been invited to attend this briefing. It was confirmed that the relevant presentation slides and notes would be forwarded to Andy.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes be noted;
- 2) the next meeting of the Committee focus on progress relating to the review of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.