

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.25 PM

### **Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Andy Croy, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Emma Hobbs, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

### **Officers Present**

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

### **62. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **63. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

### **64. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **65. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **66. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **67. WBC RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 15 to 46, which referred to the Committee's report: WBC Response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee had agreed the 10 recommendations in the report on the pandemic at its meeting on 25 November 2020. The final report brought together the results of a number of Scrutiny reviews undertaken by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The report would be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 25 February 2021. The Executive would also consider a report setting out the officer response to the recommendations in the O&S report.

The Committee was requested to consider the process for developing the O&S report on the pandemic and any learning points. It was also asked to consider any ongoing issues for inclusion in the 2021/22 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes (considered later on the Agenda).

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

The recommendations in the report did not include reference to the importance of building on the improved levels of partnership working arising out of the pandemic. It was confirmed that the Committee's report had been submitted and could not be amended.

However, it was possible to ask the Executive to consider further points alongside the recommendations in the report.

A number of positive operational issues had arisen during the pandemic, including the move to home working, positive support to care homes and rough sleepers and new methods of service delivery. It was suggested that this point also be referred to the Executive for consideration.

Could the report to the Executive include an update on the latest developments relating to the Council's response to the pandemic?

Could the report to the Executive be re-titled: WBC "initial" response to the pandemic?

It was suggested that two items be considered for inclusion in the 2021/22 Work Programme:

- Opportunities arising out of the "green recovery" from the pandemic;
- The impact of the pandemic on the Council's structures and ways of working – the new normal.

The report on the pandemic highlighted the impact on female employment. It was suggested that the impact of the current lockdown on nurseries be highlighted in that Early Years settings were funded based on the number of children actually attending rather than the number of children registered. It was suggested that this issue be raised at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was proposed by Sarah Kerr and seconded by Guy Grandison that:

- the Executive ensures that the improved partnership working between the Council and external organisations not only continues, but is further developed.
- the Executive ensures that the lessons learnt from operationally managing the pandemic are not only continued, but are further developed and supported.

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

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the final version of the O&S report on the WBC response to the pandemic be noted;
- 2) in addition to the recommendations in the report, the Chairman write to the Leader of the Council requesting that the Executive consider the following points:
  - that the improved partnership working between the Council and external organisations not only continues, but is further developed;
  - that the lessons learnt from operationally managing the pandemic are not only continued, but are further developed and supported.
- 3) the issue of funding for early years settings during the current lockdown be considered at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 4) the following items be added to the Committee's Work Programme:

- Opportunities arising out of the “green recovery” from the pandemic;
- The impact of the pandemic on the Council’s structures and ways of working – the new normal.

## **68. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES FOR 2021/22**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 47 to 54, which set out proposals to develop the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2021/22.

The report stated that effective work programming was a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Council Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan and major policy or service changes. It aimed to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which had the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

The report stated that, in order to generate ideas and involvement from local residents, community groups and stakeholders, the Council’s website and social media would be used to publicise the development of the Work Programmes. In considering potential issues for review, Members would take into account the previously agreed selection criteria:

- Whether the issue was of local, and preferably current, concern;
- Whether undertaking the review can be linked to the Council’s Vision, priorities and underpinning principles or would help achieve these;
- Whether the topic was already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council (e.g. as part of the Continuous Improvement Programme);
- Was the topic one that was capable of being influenced by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Was the topic of manageable scope – not too wide-ranging and yet of sufficient size to warrant a Scrutiny review;
- Whether sufficient resources were available to support the Scrutiny review;
- If a review was warranted, should it have a high, medium or low priority?

The report suggested that potential items for inclusion in the 2021/22 Work Programmes be submitted to the Committee’s meeting in March 2021 for consideration and prioritisation.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have made recommendations, what is the process for reporting back on implementation and progress?

How does the Committee carry out “horizon scanning” to identify potential items for future Scrutiny? It was suggested that a report on this issue be considered at the next meeting.

It was suggested that an in-depth review be carried out into the Council's engagement with the community and voluntary sectors, including the development of the co-produced anti-poverty strategy.

Members suggested potential items for inclusion in the 2021/22 Work Programme, as follows:

- Scrutiny of the Council's Standards Committee;
- Improving communications with residents and community groups;
- Changes to the Council's systems and working environment;
- Changes to the Planning system.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Members submit ideas for inclusion in the 2021/22 Work Programmes to Democratic Services;
- 2) the process for public consultation on the 2021/22 Work Programmes, set out in the report, be approved;
- 3) the final 2021/22 Work Programmes be agreed at the meeting of the Committee in March 2021;
- 4) each Overview and Scrutiny Committee carry out one or more detailed Scrutiny reviews during 2021/22;
- 5) that a report be submitted to the next meeting with suggestions to improve horizon scanning and the identification of future pre-decision Scrutiny items.

#### **69. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND IEMD FORWARD PROGRAMMES**

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme, as set out on Agenda pages 55 to 62.

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Programmes be noted.

#### **70. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee considered its forward Work Programme for 2020/21 and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out on Agenda pages 63 to 72.

Alison Swaddle reported that the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group would be meeting on 27 January 2021. It was suggested that relevant Members be invited to join the Task and Finish Group.

Sarah Kerr, Paul Fishwick, Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey and Jim Frewin referred to the emerging WBC Equality Plan and expressed concern that the plan would not be subject to Scrutiny until after its approval by the Executive.

**RESOLVED:** That the forward Work Programmes for 2020/21 be noted.