

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 20 July 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Axam, Collins, Crookes, Davies, Dorn, Drage, Farmer, Harward, Smith and Worlock (Chairman)

In attendance:

Cllr James Radley
Cllr Graham Cockarill
Cllr Steve Forster

Officers:

Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Emma Foy	Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Mark Jaggard	Head of Place
Kirsty Jenkins	Head of Community
Steven Bennett	Change and Digital Manager
Rachael Wilkinson	Community Safety Manager
Jenny Humphreys	Committee Services Officer
Rebecca Borrett	Committee Services Officer

8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 15 June 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Wildsmith.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded members who hadn't yet, to register and enable Modern.Gov to view Meeting Agendas and Minutes.

13 REVISED SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURE AND PROPOSED MODERN SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The Community Safety Manager presented the updated Safeguarding Policy, which as a local authority we are required to update every three years. The reporting concerns procedure within this policy had also been updated.

The newly drafted Modern Slavery Transparency Statement was also discussed. This is not a requirement but it's best practise and sets out the council's intent to support the stand against it.

Members asked questions that included:

- The new areas that had been highlighted and the main differences to the previous policy.
- The production of a contacts card for staff and members with links on and numbers of organisations to contact.
- The involvement of youth groups in this kind of work.

Members also reminded the team to regularly update their lists of contacts. The Manager highlighted the quarterly safeguarding champion meetings that are held across Hart and Rushmoor which helps with this.

DECISION

The Committee welcomed the draft revised Safeguarding Policy & Procedure and Modern Slavery Transparency Statement and subject to the inclusion of a contacts card recommended that Strategy to Cabinet.

14 CRIME AND DISORDER JOINT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Minutes from the meeting held on 29 June 2021 were noted, with the following comments from members considered:

- In agenda item 6 it didn't say how the team is meeting or succeeding the plan. The plan was shared prior to the meeting but the Chairman agreed that it would have been useful to have the plan attached.
- More information and detail was requested on antisocial behaviour.
- The Cabinet member for crime and disorder be invited to provide more information or attend a member briefing in the future.
- It was also noted that there had not been a briefing recently to the council from the District Commander for Hampshire Constabulary.

The Chairman highlighted that it would be good to also invite Cllr Miller from Basingstoke and Deane (the current Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Joint Committee) to a future meeting.

The Head of Community highlighted to members that there is a new Community Safety Newsletter.

15 COMMUNITY TRIGGER POLICY

The Community Safety Manager gave a summary of the policy. It was highlighted that the council had received a letter recently from Government confirming their commitment to anti-social behaviour and this policy supports that.

DECISION

The Committee reviewed the policy and procedure and asked Cabinet to consider the following points:

- How would staff and members of the public be aware of previous complaints?
- The accuracy of reporting complaints.
- How will anonymity be managed when reporting complaints and can this be clarified?
- Local schools, community and church leaders and shops should be involved if they are not already.

16 CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

The Joint Chief Executive and Change and Digital Manager presented the updated Customer Care Policy and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy to the Committee.

The pandemic had highlighted the lack of letters (post) that the council now receives, and the policy reflects this. The policy had been written reflecting the Council's Change Champions experiences.

The Change and Digital Manager plans for the policy to have more presence as a section on the Council's website rather than a document that is uploaded.

The Change and Digital Manager agreed with a member that more analysis of complaints and the feeding back on how those complaints are dealt with would be beneficial and something we could look at further.

The Committee question the practical implications of restricting access to officers if a complaint persisted in acting unreasonably, The Joint Chief Executive advised that this form of restriction was highly unusual. There were no recent examples of it being necessary albeit in some instances a single point of contact arrangement was put in place where it was necessary to co-ordinate the Council's response when a 'scatter-gun' approach across Councils services was being adopted by a complainant. Instances where the Council had decided to terminate contact with a complainant and discontinue any investigation into their complaint would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny as part of general complaint monitoring.

The Joint Chief Executive reminded Members that the Council's complaints procedure was only part of the complaints wider end to end process and that ultimately all complaints had a right to have their complaints independently considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In this regard the Ombudsman issues Annual reports to all Council's and the Annual reports for Hart will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee shortly.

DECISION

The Committee had no comments to forward on to Cabinet.

17 PLACE SERVICES

The Chairman highlighted that Councillors Farmer, Smith and Wildsmith have agreed to provide liaison on the implementation of the Planning Development Action Peer Review.

The Head of Place gave a summary that included recruitment in the team, current issues being experienced by the service and case management. It was confirmed that there are two contractors currently in the department and the rest are permanent employees.

The Council is looking to appoint a new Development Management & Building Control Manager due to a senior manager leaving. There are also plans in place to appoint an Interim Manager to cover any gaps in the meantime, which is first being looked at through internal recruitment.

The Portfolio Holder for Place highlighted there have been staffing and budget challenges over the last year. Caseloads have also been high.

Members discussions on this issue included:

- The teams budget.
- The restrictions to on-site visits due to the covid-19 pandemic.
- The customer experience and what happens during this process, not just the end result.
- Looking at best practise from other councils planning teams.

The Committee recognised and appreciated the staff's dedication and hard work

The Joint Chief Executive, Head of Place and Portfolio Holder for Place agreed to give an update at August's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

18 HART HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Councillors Davies, Farmer, Harward and Smith volunteered to comprise the Hart Housing Property Management Company's Scrutiny Panel.

The Joint Chief Executive to ask Cabinet if the four members can make up the panel, as the original intention was to have three members.

19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020/21

The Head of Corporate Services and S151 Officer summarised the annual review report, which included Outturn and Compliance and highlighted that all requirements had been met.

Members questions included:

- Interest rates and why we have money invested in other borough councils.
- Internal borrowing and how it is represented.

The Head of Corporate Services stated that we have our rate with Barclays due to banking with them. Local authorities are considered safe to invest in as they are backed by Central Government.

The Head of Corporate Services also agreed to look at how internal borrowing can be displayed in this kind of report in the future.

DECISION

The report was noted and will be considered by Cabinet in August. A section on internal borrowing to be added.

20 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet work programme was noted with members suggesting that Cabinet may wish to consider or include in its work programme the following matters:

- The Parking Review that came into effect in May and its impact.
- A review of the Civic Quarter.
- A full medium term financial strategy.

The Joint Chief Executive agreed these would be passed on the Cabinet Chairman.

21 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny workplan was noted, with members highlighting items they would like to see included in it:

- Community Safety Transition – 6 month review update.
- Multi Agency and Parish Flood Forum – dates to be added.
- Corporate Risk Management – dates to be added.
- Waste Management Transition to Basingstoke – 6 month review update.

The Joint Chief Executive agreed to look at these.

The meeting closed at 9.13 pm