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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

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

In attendance:

Cllrs Bailey, Butcher, Clarke, Cockarill, Oliver, Neighbour
From Hook Parish Council – Cllrs Nabbs and Orchard

Officers:

Daryl Phillips, Joint Chief Executive
Patricia Hughes, Joint Chief Executive
Kirsty Jenkins, Head of Community
Daniel Hawes, Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager
Nicola Harpham, Strategy & Development Manager
Amy Summers, Media and Communications Manager
Jenny Wood, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Alex Jones, Flood Risk Management Officer
Peter Summersell, Sustainability Officer
Jenny Humphreys, Committee Services Officer

60 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

63 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman moved agenda Item 12 after Item 14.

Cllr Dorn said that he had been unable to see a report for Item 11 and the Joint Chief Executive (DP) agreed to clarify the questions he had about Modern.gov outside of the meeting.

64 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

65 CORPORATE SERVICE PANEL UPDATE

Most Members summarised that the meeting content was clear and concise and that they were comfortable the team was doing a good job.

A Member asked for definitions on the red, amber, blue and green criteria in the report and this was discussed.

The Joint Chief Executive (PH) reassured members that the Staff Survey had already been completed.

The Chairman informed members that the report for the latest Place Service Board meeting had been issued today.

66 MULTI AGENCY AND PARISH FLOOD FORUM

The Chairman introduced Alex Jones to The Committee. Alex recently joined the council as Flood Risk Management Officer.

Alex summarised that last month's Multi Agency meeting with Thames Water went well and the next meeting is 7 March 2022. The date for the next Parish Flood Forum is still to be confirmed.

Members wanted to help the team make more contact with parish councils to get more of them to attend future flooding meetings. The Chairman agreed to mention this at the next meeting with Hart District Association of Parish and Town Councils in January.

A Member asked the Flood Risk Management Officer for an update on Mill Corner, Odiham.

67 CAR PARKING CHARGES REVIEW - FEEDBACK

The Chairman introduced Cllrs Verd Nabbs and John Orchard from Hook Parish Council.

Cllr Nabbs summarised that the one-hour parking scheme had been well received and Cllr Orchard stressed that more adequate signage was required to highlight the car parks, particularly Crossways Manor.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment reported that Hook parents had been issued parking permits. Emergency vehicles also had permits to park, but more enforcement was needed to prevent them using disabled spaces.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment confirmed that Hampshire County Council's support is needed to install road signs.

A Member summarised the parking charges effect in Hartley Wintney and believed that short term parking was working better than long term. More residents need to be reminded to display their parking permits.

More accurate assessments for all parking charges and car parks are expected to be carried out when the covid 19 pandemic improves.

68 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Environment reported that the waste management transition to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council had completed. He summarised that staff were calm and happy and the senior leadership team at Basingstoke had learnt lessons along the way.

The Joint Chief Executive (PH) acknowledged that there are existing service delivery challenges, particularly with the garden waste collection service and she received daily updates.

Members were keen to hear Basingstoke Council's opinion of the transition and the Joint Chief Executive (DP) suggested inviting a representative from the council to a future meeting.

Members also questioned:

- The Council's engagement with the contract.
- The service's performance and the possibility of receiving monthly updates.
- Issues with the service and why they were occurring.
- The garden waste scheme letters and how they had been received and understood by residents.

The Joint Chief Executive (PH) confirmed that regular KPIs, data and updates would be provided soon.

69 DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Digital summarised the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy and reminded members it was a living document.

Members praised the team and the council for its transparency in producing this strategy.

RECOMMEDATION

Members recommended the draft strategy to Cabinet with the following comments:

- Climate change implications to be included in the document.

- Changing the length of the review – currently it is four years, could it be done annually.
- The inclusion of links to resident’s items of interest, not just statutory obligations (3.1).
- Political implications need to be carefully managed and considered when planning, creating and delivering news (3.6).
- The inclusion of more links to parishes and parish councils (4.1).
- More description on how the council provides news to people who are not as digitally enabled.
- How the team manages and archives historical content on the council’s website.

70 A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO REVIEW PROJECTS FOR HOUSING CAPITAL SPEND

The Portfolio Holder for Community explained the team were seeking six Members to form a Task and Finish Group which will assist in the assessment and development of projects to be funded from the Housing Capital Fund.

Councillors Axam, Collins, Harward, Farmer, and Wildsmith volunteered. Cllr Axam is unable to attend the first meeting on 8 December. The Chairman said she also hoped to attend this meeting, pending diary commitments.

71 HOUSING CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Portfolio Holder for Community summarised the report, setting out a proposal to ringfence a proportion of the housing capital funds to support housing associations to provide energy efficiency measures in some new affordable homes.

The Strategy and Development Manager explained that a site had been identified that will provide 14 affordable homes – 11 rented and three shared ownership and believed this could be a good pilot site.

Members questions included:

- How energy efficiency benefits would be monitored and measured.
- The type of data that would be collected and how.
- The possibility of upgrading existing housing schemes in Hart to be more energy efficient.
- For the team to define the criteria that will be used to award money.

Members liked and supported this funding and welcomed schemes that would provide the Council with additional knowledge on more energy efficient housing initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee wanted more information, evidence, and operational costs to be included in the report before it could be recommended to Cabinet.

The Chairman to send the Committee information and data on Passivhaus and summarise tonight's discussions to the team.

72 HART INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT ON FIRST HOMES

The Portfolio Holder for Place, Principal Planning Policy Officer and Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager explained that the Government had introduced First Homes as an affordable housing product in May 2021 and that the Council is looking to introduce an Interim Planning Policy statement to reflect this.

The Joint Chief Executive (DP) asked if the Rural Exception sites policy could be exploited but officers confirmed that First Homes Exception sites now exist, so this is unlikely.

The Leader of the Council questioned why the Housing Team appeared to be reducing the number of rental homes in the borough. The Strategy and Development Manager confirmed that this was an interim approach that required further work.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee noted the content of the report with the following comments:

- The price of the first sale after discount is £250,000 - what this could afford in Hart compared to other areas.
- How this policy would affect the current Local Plan.
- Further work that would be needed after adoption of the policy.
- The decimal points in table 4.5 could be confusing.
- The inclusion of parish and town councils in planning policies (4.7).
- How and when is the First Home given up and how can the purpose of a First Home be preserved.
- The effect this will have on Neighbourhood plans.

73 A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO UPDATE AND REFRESH THE CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY

The Joint Chief Executive (PH) reminded Members that the Council is currently updating and refreshing its Corporate Complaint Policy. Members were being sought to form a Task and Finish Group to finalise the project details; with the first virtual meeting scheduled for Wednesday 1 December.

Councillors Davies, Drage, Dorn and Smith agreed to be part of this group.

74 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Joint Chief Executive (PH) confirmed that a Members work group for Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy will be held after December's Cabinet meeting.

75 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman confirmed she was inviting the Portfolio Holder for Place and Head of Place to January's Overview and Scrutiny meeting to discuss the introduction of a policy on renewable energy for Hart.

The meeting closed at 9.51 pm