

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Dorn (Chairman), Butcher, Butler, Davies, Engström, Farmer, Harward, Smith, Thomas, Vernon and Forster

In attendance:

Quartermen (Virtual)

Local Partnerships (all Virtual)

Emma Bull

Jo Wall

Nathan Wicks

Officers:

Graeme Clark, Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Jaggard, Executive Director Place

Lord, Committee and Members Services Officer

1 ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

There were 2 nominations for Vice Chairman

- Councillor Butler (proposed Cllr Davies, seconded Cllr Engström)
- Councillor Farmer (proposed Cllr Butcher, seconded Cllr Forster)

A query was raised about the validity of a Vice Chairman being elected from the ruling party, but it was explained that this was allowable in the constitution as the Vice Chairman would only act in place of the Chairman and not take on the role of the Chairman.

Voting

For Councillor Butler – Butler, Davies, Engström, Harward, Smith, Thomas, Vernon (7)

For Councillor Farmer – Butcher, Dorn, Farmer, Forster (4)

Decision

Councillor Butler would be the elected Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of April 11th 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Coburn, Councillor Forster attended as a substitute.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Farmer declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 as Chairman of the Hart Swimming Club.

5 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that the Overview and Scrutiny Training had had to be deferred to another date and would be discussed in agenda item 12.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Councillor Forster declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest as a member of Hampshire County Council during this item.

The meeting was given a brief introduction to the report and to "Local Partnerships", the organisation that had produced it.

Local Partnerships then gave a presentation on "Hart's Carbon Pathway". Highlighting how it linked to Hart District Council's Corporate Plan. It was explained how the plan was broken down into 3 focus areas, Buildings, Energy and Transport. Details were given on how the council should guide the district using the 3 Es, Example, Enable and Encourage.

The meeting agreed that they liked the objectives and how they were linked and noted that this is a much-improved plan. Members felt that there were some matters that needed further investigation,

- Terminology - concern was raised that there were still references to Net Zero in the reports and on the web site. Officers undertook to ensure that only the term Carbon Neutral would be used in future and that all references to Net Zero would be removed. It was also noted that a reference to OLEV should say OZED instead.
- Clarity – although the meeting liked the objectives it felt that it should be clearer who would be setting them and when. Concern was also raised about the vagueness of the outcomes. It was felt that these should be more specific. It was felt that reasonable time scales also needed to be set.
- Funding – it was explained that the outcomes were closely linked to funding. Discussion took place around how the various projects would be funded. It was acknowledged that there was some funding available in reserves, however the meeting was also told that there would be funding available from Central Government. It was explained any funding from Central Government was generally only available for a short space of time, and so Local Partnerships was working with Hart’s Climate Change team to ensure that it was ready to bid for any funding as soon as it was available.
- Priorities – following on from the discussions about applying for funding, suggestions were made about splitting the objectives into smaller categories to give more flexibility, particularly the ‘indicative cost’ measure, allowing the council to prioritise more efficiently and so be able to take advantage of all and any opportunities that arise. However, it was also commented that expensive projects should not be dismissed as it was always possible that funding may be made available in the future.
- Renewable Energy – a query was raised as to whether, or not the council was already using 100% renewable energy. It was commented that Hart District Council bought green energy through a Hampshire County Council Scheme, but officers agreed to investigate exactly how green the energy purchased was. A query was also raised about the placing of Wind Turbines on Bramshot Country Park, it was agreed that Local Partnerships should reach out to the various airports in the district to see if this was in fact a viable option.

Transport – it was commented that there seemed to be an omission in the report as regard to “getting people out of petrol and diesel vehicles”. Local Partnerships agreed and this additional point would be passed to Cabinet for consideration.

- Governance – it was welcomed that Corporate Project board would be overseeing the key projects and that Overview and Scrutiny would also be part of the governance process. Members felt that projects should not be open ended and that monies should only be released on the completion of the previous step.

Mr Clark thanked members for their input and informed them that he would be passing their comments on to Cabinet.

Local Partnerships were thanked for their work on this project.

8 FEEDBACK FROM VISIT TO CCTV CENTRE

Members gave their feedback on their visit to the new CCTV unit in Runnymede.

The feedback highlighted many positive aspects of the new centre, however there were some concerns with the arrangements.

The meeting was informed.

- The centre has high quality equipment including over 700 monitors, which are watched by trained staff who know the areas. The equipment including cameras are replaced on a 3-year rolling programme.
- There is a good relationship between the centre and the police. It was confirmed that although at the moment the police would have to travel to Runnymede to pick up copies of recordings, a terminal is due to be installed in the near future at Rushmoor Council offices that would give them remote access.
- The control room is connected to the police and can notify them if the police's assistance is required.
- The control room is also connected to Pubwatch, and members had been informed that this could be extended to Fleet Bid, so that businesses in Fleet could be alerted to any potential issues.
- Concern had been raised about the number of monitors, however it had been stated that there were sufficient staff, who had been trained in what to look for. The manager of the centre had also confirmed that he would not be expanding the centre to take on more clients without making sure he had the capacity to do so.

It was agreed that the visit had been a success. However, it was commented on that, although the quality of the recording was good it was only of use if the police requested it. It was felt however that the presence of the cameras was deterrent in itself. The meeting was told that at the recent residents meeting on Elvetham Heath the possibility of installing some cameras on the Heath was raised.

It was commented that the purpose of the cameras should be communicated to residents, as there had been some queries about using them to monitor issues of people sleeping rough.

9 CONSERVATION AREA TASK AND FINISH GROUP

A member of the Task and Finish group introduced the item by explaining the definition of a Conservation area, and the criteria it had to meet.

The meeting was told that the group met with four Parish Councils and the Planning Policy & Economic Development Manager. The parishes had reported their experiences in undertaking Conservation Area appraisals, these had greatly differed, as had their approaches, several had relied on help from consultants.

The Task and Finish Group made 16 recommendations to assist the process going forward.

The Executive Director – Place thanked the Task and Finish Group and said he thought their work had been really helpful. He agreed to return in the Autumn to provide an update on the actions against each one of the recommendations.

It was commented that Hart District council supported the report and the action plan, but it should be noted that Hart was a very “lean” organisation, and it was possible that in house support would not always be available and that parishes should be encouraged to use outside consultants.

A query was raised about the appraisal reports. It was agreed that all reports should be created on Microsoft Office compatible platforms. The quality and standard of the reports was also discussed. The meeting was told that the Conservation Area Appraisals should be robust enough to provide the evidence required should they be needed to be used in a planning appeal.

Thanks was given to the group for their hard work, and they were informed that the CEO Mr Phillips particularly wanted to give them his congratulations on how well this Task and Finish Group operated.

10 ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO SERVICE PANELS

The meeting was reminded of the purpose of the Service Panels and the members role on them and it was confirmed that the meetings would be held on TEAMS. The Members were told that there had been a change of date to the 1st Place meeting, to Tuesday August 1st.

Nominations

Community - Councillors Butcher, Butler and Thomas
Corporate - Councillors Farmer, Smith and Thomas
Place - Councillors Butler, Coburn and Engström

Proposed Cllr Butcher, seconded Cllr Smith
Voted unanimously.

For the benefit of the new Councillors there was a brief introduction to Butterwood Homes.

Nominations

Councillors Davies, Engström, Farmer and Smith

Proposed Cllr Farmer, seconded Cllr Butcher

11 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

A request was made that the 3 members from the Odiham Ward were briefed on the potential sale of the Swan Pub.

It was agreed that the Flood Schemes review should come to O&S in July.

Confirmation was sought as to whether the Climate Change Action Plan was going to Cabinet in July. It was confirmed that it was, and that the comments from O&S would be included.

12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

It was explained to the meeting that the O&S training/development session had been moved to allow members to get the full benefit from it. Members were also informed that the training was not just for new members to the committee, but for all members to develop the committee to get the best out of it. It was agreed that the dates would be circulated so that members could indicate their availability. Members noted that the session would be approx. 2 hours and they were generally happy with a 6pm start.

It was queried as to why the review of Reserves was going to Cabinet in August but not coming to O&S in July. It was confirmed that the Reserve Review would in fact be coming to O&S in July.

In light of the recent visit, it was questioned as to whether it was still of value to have the Portfolio holder for CCTV attend the next meeting. It was agreed that since the Portfolio holder was being asked to give an update on the improvement of the service since the move, rather than an update on the visit then it was still appropriate to invite the Portfolio holder.

Attention was brought to the items on the work programme related to Core Grants, it was explained that these items were related to the groups that Hart supported and the groups would be providing feedback on how the money was being spent.

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm