

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Remote Meeting held on Thursday, 11th June, 2020 at 6.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Sue Carter (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr T.D. Bridgeman  
Cllr R.M. Cooper  
Cllr Veronica Graham-Green  
Cllr Christine Guinness  
Cllr L. Jeffers  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr S.J. Masterson

## **1. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was advised that, following the appointments to committees made at the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, a change had been made by the Conservative Group to its membership of the Committee. It was noted that Cllr Veronica Graham Green had replaced Cllr Jacqui Vosper as a member of the Committee.

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMEN**

**RESOLVED:** That Cllrs. Mrs D.B. Bedford and Sue Carter be appointed as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February, 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## **4. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Andrew Colver, Head of Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships, gave a presentation on the working arrangements of the Committee. The Committee noted that the Council had to have a scrutiny committee, that was politically balanced and could give an independent view. There was little restriction on issues could be scrutinised within the Council executive and, non-executive functions and external organisations could also be scrutinised. However, it was important to avoid duplication with the work of the Policy and Project Advisory Board and regular meetings would be scheduled between the Chairmen to discuss current and future work.

The Committee would have regular items on the work plan, in particular performance monitoring which would take place once a quarter. These items would be scheduled into the work plan at the beginning of each Municipal Year.

The work plan would be considered at the progress meetings which would take place between each main committee meeting. It was important that there was a planned/purposeful approach when considering items for the work plan. It was noted that not more than four to five task and finish groups should be operating at any one time and consideration should be given to resources when determining areas for detailed scrutiny at task and finish groups.

A request was made for future items that could be considered at the next Progress Group meeting. These should be shared with the Chairman, Mr. Colver or the committee administrator.

It was proposed that a scrutiny training session could be held for the whole committee. This was agreed in principle and a date would be sought.

In summary, the Committee provided a key role within the governance structure and had the freedom to choose what to scrutinise and act upon it. It was felt important that the process was outcome driven and the scrutiny process provided constructive challenge.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Colver for his presentation.

## **5. REGISTERED PROVIDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP - ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received the 2019/20 annual report on the work of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group from Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford, Chairman, and Mrs. Sue Thornett, Strategy and Enabling Officer.

Cllr Bedford, commented that the 2019/20 Municipal Year review had worked well. The five registered providers selected to be reviewed, had engaged with Members, met on site for visits to properties and attended meetings with Members at the Council Offices to discuss issues in more detail. The Group continued to build relationships with registered providers and would decide which providers would be scrutinised during 2020/21 at their first meeting of the new Municipal Year. A suggestion was made to ensure VIVID was included, as the largest provider, for the 2020/21 review.

In response to a query, it was noted that during the Coronavirus pandemic 25% of VIVID staff had been furloughed. However they had been working closely with Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council to provide accommodation to those in need and had worked with local foodbanks providing food for those in need. During the peak of the pandemic, registered providers had been providing emergency work/repairs in their properties and it was hoped now restrictions were to be eased other non-essential work could commence.

A discussion was held around gas safety checks and the complications around mixed tenancy properties. Leaseholders could not be forced to carry out gas safety checks to comply with safety standards. Providers were currently looking at initiatives for offering the service to leaseholders at a discounted rate and adding a clause in the lease agreement, but this could still be refused. This would be followed up as part of the 2020/21 review.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the report with the proviso that the any issues were raised with the Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bedford and Mrs. Thornett for the report.

## 6. **TOWN CENTRE MARKETS AND CAR BOOT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee welcomed Mr. John Trusler, Principal Engineer, who was in attendance to provide a report on the town centre markets and car boot sales.

Mr. Trusler gave an overview of the background to the current position regarding markets and car boots. In 2013/14, the market in Farnborough had operated out of the Princesmead car park and at that time there had been some uncertainty around continuing to trade in that location. As a result, a decision had been taken to look at a different approach in both towns. In 2015, the Council had decided to take the day to day operation of the markets and car boots back in house and relocate the Farnborough market in the pedestrianised Queensmead area. An independent market assessor had been asked to carry out a review and it had been estimated that the Council could be earning in the region of £214,000 per year from its market and car boot offer. Unfortunately, this amount had never been realised and the most the Council had earned had been around £128,000 in 2015/16, with a steady decrease year on year since, resulting in earnings of less than £20,000 in 2019/20.

Planning conditions restricting calling out, music etc. in Queensmead had contributed to the decline in Farnborough and the Aldershot market had seen a decline following the closure of Marks and Spencer and other High Street stores. The Farnborough car boot, however, had continued to perform well making an average of £1-1.5k per day, with the Aldershot car boot operating at a loss.

A number of actions had been taken during this period to improve the offer, these included:

- A cut in running costs
- A health check by the National Market Trader Association on the Farnborough market
- Recruitment of a Market Operative to encourage new traders, build relations etc.
- Market testing to find a provider to run the offer – one operator showed an interest but wanted the Council to run it on their behalf with no income

The Coronavirus Pandemic had also had an impact on the markets and car boots. The street markets were operating again with certain restrictions in place although the restrictions and the reduction in space meant that some traders had been turned

away. Consideration was currently being given to the re-opening of the car boots sales, but it was difficult to see how this could happen in the current situation. There were a number of options to consider moving forward with the opening of the car boot sales, these included an amalgamation of the two sites and the provision of an open air offer during the summer months and a covered site in the winter.

The current situation with COVID-19 offered an opportunity to review the operating arrangements for the markets and car boots and give consideration of how the delivery could be taken forward.

Following a discussion, it was **AGREED** that a workshop would be arranged to consider this item in more detail. A date would be found and circulated to all Members of the Committee.

## 7. **2019/20 PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**

The Portfolio Holder for Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships, Cllr Adrian Newell attended the meeting to advise on the performance outcomes set out in the Cabinet Report and accompanying papers considered at the Cabinet Meeting held on 2nd June. It was advised that any feedback on the performance data would be welcomed by the Cabinet.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the report.

## 8. **APPOINTMENTS 2020/21**

**RESOLVED:** That the following Members be appointed to serve on the following Groups for the 2020/21 Municipal Year:

### **Review of Registered Providers Task and Finish Group**

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairmen	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford Cllr Sue Carter
Conservative Group	Cllr R.M. Cooper
Labour Group	Cllr T.D Bridgeman Cllr K.Dibble

### **Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group**

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford
Conservative Group	Cllr Veronica Graham-Green Cllr Mara Makunura
Labour Group	Cllr A.H. Crawford Cllr M.J. Roberts

### **Overview and Scrutiny Progress Group**

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairmen	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford Cllr Sue Carter
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin Cllr Christine Guinness

### **Educational Improvement Task and Finish Group**

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Sue Carter
Conservative Group	Cllr Mara Makunura Cllr S.J. Masterson
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin Cllr Nadia Martin

### **Highways Agency Task and Finish Group**

Vice-Chairman	Cllr Sue Carter
Conservative Group	Cllr L. Jeffers Cllr S.J. Masterson Cllr C.J. Stewart
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin Cllr Christine Guinness
Liberal Democrat Group	Cllr A.K. Chowdhury

## **9. WORK PLAN**

The current work plan was noted.

Items for the next meeting were noted as:

- Work Force Report
- Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1

It was noted that an addendum was attached to the current work plan giving an update on the Moor Road Playing Fields. It was reported that the contractors were keen to be back on site and complete the works.

It was advised that work had been carried out on the issues raised around pavement parking at a previous meeting of the Committee. Work was progressing and once the Portfolio Holder had given approval, a further update would be given.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)

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