

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 17th June, 2021 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr S.J. Masterson (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr Jib Belbase  
Cllr M.S. Choudhary  
Cllr R.M. Cooper  
Cllr K. Dibble  
Cllr L. Jeffers  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr Nem Thapa

## 1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

A discussion took place regarding the Vice-Chairman and the roles they had undertaken during the previous Municipal Year. It was noted that information on roles and responsibilities were set out in the Constitution and this would be circulated to Members.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllrs. Mrs D.B. Bedford and S.J. Masterson be appointed as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

## 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th March, 2021 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

## 3. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee welcomed Mr. Andrew Colver, Head of Democracy and Community, who gave an introduction to the Committee.

The Committee held a key role within the Council's decision making structure, by working with the executive to a common aim. It was a politically balanced committee with no executive/decision making powers, but had the ability to carry out detailed examination and scrutiny of issues, to provide outcomes/recommendations to help inform the decision making process.

There were few restrictions on work areas, which could include executive and non-executive functions and other services, especially those outside the Council. It was

important to consider the work of the Policy and Project Advisory Board when determining agenda for meetings, to ensure no duplication of work. This would be monitored by way of a joint meeting between the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of both the Committee and the Board.

The Committee agenda had a number of regular items, such as performance monitoring reports and scrutiny of registered providers. Other items could include, call ins, pre-decision scrutiny and scrutiny of outside organisations. Task and Finish Groups could also be established to work on a particular project in more detail should the Committee feel that necessary. Members were encouraged to raise any items they would like considered for inclusion on the agenda, these could be reported to the Committee Administrator or Mr. Colver.

It was noted that a date would be circulated for a scrutiny training session to be held, in person, over the summer. This would aim to guide Members in their role and highlight the principles of scrutiny, which included:

- Holding decision makers to account – e.g. projects led by individual Cabinet Members
- Assessment of processes/systems – to propose improvements and ensure effectiveness
- Effective challenge and assuming nothing
- Outcome driven with a clear purpose

The Chairman thanked Mr. Colver for his presentation.

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

Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford, Chairman of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group and Mrs Sue Thornett, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer introduced Report No. EPSH2017 on the work of the Group during 2020/21.

Cllr Bedford, advised that it had been a difficult year with the impacts of the pandemic. No physical meetings with the providers had been held but a number of interesting online meetings had raised different issues. The “Everyone In” scheme, aimed at ensuring all homeless people where in accommodation at the beginning of the pandemic, had raised a number of issues for the housing team, but these had been overcome and the scheme had worked well.

It was noted that the Group had a work plan and generally scrutinised three registered providers per Municipal Year. VIVID Housing, as the Borough’s largest provider, was included in the work plan annually. However, during 2020/21, issues with a fourth provider had been raised and a number of meetings had taken place to address these concerns. It was noted that the work with this provider was progressing and an additional meeting was expected to be held in March, 2022 to track progress.

It was advised that Ward Councillors had the opportunity to have an input prior to meetings with the providers, this allowed for councillors to pass on data/information from residents directly to inform the scrutiny process.

Mrs Thornett advised that, through the Group, the relationship between the providers and the Council had grown stronger. The working arrangements of the Group had developed over time and was no longer about a presentation from the provider, but a chance for questions to be asked and action plans to be created to resolve issues. This approach would continue to be developed into the new Municipal Year.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the work of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group during 2020/21 and **APPROVED** the preparation of a programme of reviews on the 2021/22 Municipal Year. However, it was **NOTED** that the Portfolio Holder should to be made aware of the work of the Group and a meeting would be arranged.

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

## 5. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2020/21**

The Committee welcomed Ms Rachel Barker, Assistant Chief Executive, who was in attendance to give a presentation on Performance Management and Monitoring 2020/21.

At its meeting in February, 2021, the Committee had considered some review work which had been undertaken on the way the Council's performance had been monitored and reported on. This work had been endorsed and continued to be developed and embedded in the structure of the Council's Business Plan.

Performance management allowed the Council to monitor its achievements and ensure the work being undertaken was effective and sustainable. This was done through a number of performance measures and indicators to assess if actions/plans were being achieved. Successful performance management and monitoring resulted from a number of good practices, including, a clear vision and purpose, good planning, priorities, allocation of resources, development of action plans and ensuring the data met the need of its audience, at the right time, to inform good decision making.

Ms Barker, reported on the summary of 2020/21:

- Business Plan Projects – a number of strategies and action plans had been agreed, these included the Climate Change, Supporting Communities and Rough Sleepers Strategies and Action Plans, the Procurement Strategy 2020-24 and a revised plan for the Council's Waste and Recycling Service and Food Waste Collection Service 2021/22. Other projects included the Places Leisure contract, the Moor Road Park development, a review of polling places and districts and an action to agree the future of the CCTV service.
- Regeneration Projects – a number of projects had been completed as part of the Council's regeneration work, these included renovations to the Digital Hub, Aldershot, Voyager House, Farnborough – now operating as the Farnborough Centre for Health, Elles Hall, Farnborough demolition completed

and Union Street, Aldershot – funding agreement with Enterprise M3 in place and enabling works completed.

- ICE Programme – a number of projects had been completed or were underway, these included, rollout of Windows 10 laptops to all staff, People Strategy and a new e-billing service in council tax and an online service to “apply for a postal vote” had both been launched.

A summary was also provided on the COVID-19 response, success stories had included:

- COVID testing sites
- Vaccine Centres
- Payment of £23,000 in business grants
- 54 online council meetings
- COVID advice page on the Council’s website accessed 53,000 times
- Provision of the ORCA – which had dealt with referrals/requests for coronavirus support services

It was reported that, at the end of Q4, the majority of activities in the business plan were considered to be on track, however COVID continued to impact projects but the number of projects affected were steadily reducing.

Moving forward, a new streamlined Council Business Plan with 18 priorities would be measured each quarter, this new approach would help to ensure that there were no delays in performance data being shared.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed that the new streamline reporting would benefit the scrutiny process. It was also important however, to monitor what wasn’t performing well and why, and it was agreed that this would be discussed at a future Progress Group meeting. It was noted that the performance of the new food hub was of interest to the Committee, this issue would also be raised at the Progress Group.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the work around performance management and monitoring and thanked Ms Barker for her presentation.

## 6. **APPOINTMENTS 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:** That the following Members be appointed to serve on the following Groups for the 2021/22 Municipal Year:

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

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairmen	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford Cllr S.J. Masterson
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin

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

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford
Conservative Group	Cllr J.B. Canty Cllr L. Jeffers
Labour Group	Cllr Christine Guinness Cllr M.J. Roberts

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

Chairman	Cllr M.D. Smith
Vice-Chairmen	Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford Cllr S.J. Masterson
Conservative Group	Cllr M.S. Choudhary
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin Cllr Nadia Martin

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

Vice-Chairman	Cllr S.J. Masterson
Conservative Group	Cllr Jib Belbase Cllr P.J. Cullum Cllr L. Jeffers
Labour Group	Cllr Gaynor Austin Cllr K.Dibble

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

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

## **7. WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current work plan and **AGREED** that further consideration would be given to future items at the Progress Group meeting.

Members were asked to advise the Lead Officer or Committee Administrator of any items they wished to be considered prior to the Progress Group meeting scheduled for 23rd June, 2021.

The Food Waste Service was raised as an item for consideration, in particular around the education and communication programme with residents. Further consideration would be given to this item at the Progress Group.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)

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# POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Virtual meeting held on Wednesday, 14th July, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr J.B. Canty (Chairman)  
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr P.J. Cullum (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr Jessica Auton  
Cllr Sophia Choudhary  
Cllr Christine Guinness - as substitute  
Cllr Michael Hope  
Cllr Prabesh KC  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr M.J. Roberts

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sophie Porter.

## 8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## 9. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - BALANCING THE BUDGET CONSULTATION - UPDATE

The Board welcomed Rachel Barker, Assistant Chief Executive, who was in attendance to report on the Council's interim response to the Hampshire County Council (HCC) consultation on Balancing the Budget.

The proposed response from the Council would include the following:

- The Council supported HCC in making a case to central government for an improved funding settlement
- Support would be given to an increase in commercial activity by the County Council
- Emphasis would be given to the current work being undertaken by the Council on its own savings programme/budget review and note that it would not necessarily be looking to fund or carry out activities previously delivered by HCC
- The suggested approach to rely on other public sector agencies to provide services would be opposed
- Suggest that early engagement should be held with district and borough councils, to ensure local circumstances and differences are understood as part of the process

- Request that a cautious approach be taken where it had been assumed that voluntary and community sector organisations would address needs in the future

The Board was then apprised of the response to service proposals within the consultation, these included:

- Countryside services and outdoor centres – the Council supported exploring further commercialisation of facilities such as Runways End, but would not wish to see costs transferred to other public sector bodies.
- Breaks for carers of disabled children – a reduction in respite care could prove to be a false economy, ultimately putting more pressure on wider related service providers
- Adult social care services – the proposal to stop all grants to voluntary organisations would be opposed by the Council at this time
- Public health – The Council would be responding to the detailed consultation on public health which was also out for consultation
- School crossing patrols – cutting this service could reduce safety and increase car use directly impacting the response to climate change
- Waste – early engagement with district and borough councils would be suggested to understand the impacts of proposed restrictions at Household Waste Recycling Centres
- Transport – it was unclear where these savings could be sought in public transport costs and further information would be required to understand this better.

Ms Barker advised on a question within the consultation regarding “local government reorganisation”, and it was noted that the Council, in line with HCC, were not in favour of such a change and were supportive of the current two tier arrangements. The Council would welcome further discussions with HCC to reduce duplication of costs and services, increase devolved decision making and funding, and pursue further enhanced and joint working opportunities. Any reviews of local government should, ideally, wait until the Levelling Up White Paper was released, and any proposals should be developed in partnership between all layers of local government to ensure the best outcomes for residents were achieved.

The Board discussed the presentation and in particular, capacity building within the voluntary sector and school crossing patrols being essential in most areas to ensure safety and encourage independence within young people. Increasing commercialisation was also discussed and where this could be implemented.

It was noted that Informal Cabinet would review the response at its meeting on 15th July, therefore, should Members have any further comments these should be shared with Ms Barker before the meeting. The response would then be finalised and submitted by the 18th July, 2021 deadline.

## 10. **ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

The Board welcomed Tim Mills, Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing who was in attendance to give a presentation on the draft Interim Aldershot Town



Centre Strategy. The context to the strategy had come from various sources, these included the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD - adopted in 2016, the community consultation ran by the Aldershot Civic Society in 2020, the High Streets Task Force's reports and support and the Transition and Recovery Plan. The impacts of the pandemic and the acceleration in the demise of the high street had also had an influence.

The Interim Strategy had provided a platform to update the vision for Aldershot and thought more about communicating and developing the idea of what the town could be moving forward. Themes had been updated, based on what had been achieved since 2016 when the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD was adopted and what still needed to be achieved.

The vision for the town was proposed as a place where people felt at home and had made their homes. A town where people felt welcome and where families wanted to be. A thriving town centre that provided a range of services that were accessible to all and offered an experience to all demographics from the local community and visitors. A mix of independent and high street shops would provide employment opportunities and space to start new businesses and the Victorian and military heritage and diverse community within Aldershot, would be celebrated, maintained and developed.

Through work with the Aldershot Task Force, High Street Task Force, developers, property owners and the Civic Society, engagement with the community would be undertaken on the vision to develop a shared communications plan and ongoing campaign to tell the story of the "new Aldershot".

The Board noted what was still to be done since the SPD had been adopted in 2016. It was advised that the SPD had been separated into themes, which had items outstanding, these included:

- Theme 1- Revitalised and Diverse Town Centre Offer
  - Ensuring the correct mix of commercial floor space usage
  - Masterplanning forward thinking for other areas in the town such as Windsor Way
- Theme 2 – Town Centre Living
  - Masterplanning for Princes Hall/Police Station – mixed use
  - Opportunities for quality residential conversions
- Theme 3 - Accessible and Connected Town Centre with an Improved Public Realm
  - Connectivity study to assess accessibility/parking study
  - Public Realm – “Spaces make Places” - ensuring spaces/areas are right for the town and its residents
- Theme 4 – An Improved Cultural Offer
  - Development of the Cultural Strategy
  - Re-introduction of events programme

- Theme 5 – Affirming the Town’s Heritage
  - Implementation of heritage trials
  - Shopfront improvements to emphasise Victorian heritage

The Board noted the next steps which would be followed by engagement with Informal Cabinet and public consultation around community and public realm. The Board were asked to consider the themes and to do lists and how these fitted into the Council’s priorities.

The Board discussed the presentation and the proposed Strategy and identified a number of areas that it was felt were important and should be incorporated, these included:

- Build on the strengths of the leisure offer – identify where there were gaps locally and consider opportunities in particular at the Princes Hall
- Consideration be given to how the towns diverse culture could be promoted moving forward, not just it’s heritage
- How housing developments could improve equity in jobs, income and health
- Implementation of the Strategy and mitigation of risk
- No obvious link to the Climate Change Strategy – should be at the heart of the document
- Provision of lighting – consideration to light pollution and safety/perception of safety
- Improved connectivity with the Wellesley development
- Connectivity and redevelopment of the railway station

The points raised would be considered and where appropriate, built into the Strategy as it developed. In response to a query, it was noted that the consultation period would expect to run in the autumn.

The Board **ENDORSED** the proposed Strategy and thanked Mr. Mills for his presentation.

## 11. **SOUTHWOOD COUNTRY PARK INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Board welcomed Anna Lucas, Principal Planning Officer who was in attendance to present on the Southwood Country Park Interim Management Plan.

It was advised that the site was designated a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), the purpose of which was to divert people away from visiting Special Protection Areas (SPA). The site should consist of a number of criteria which could include, open areas and areas of dense scattered trees and shrubs, open water, circular walks, signposting and site information.

It was noted that the site had been developed from its original use as a golf course during phase 1 and temporary management of the site had been undertaken by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP). Phase 2 proposed to secure the full potential of the site, which could be achieved through a soft marketing testing

exercise and arrangements put in place for the longer-term management of the site. Once this was in place a ten year plan would be prepared.

The Interim Management Plan 2021-23 covered phase 2 of the work, management of the habitat complex and enhancements to attract different wildlife not already located on the site, maintenance and monitoring and a schedule of work. Progress on phase 2 was noted, this included work on the Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Improvement Project, options and designs for the proposed visitor centre and café and a pedestrian crossing which was currently subject to some technical work and confirmation from HCC regarding requirements.

The Board was apprised of the details of the habitat management plan. This included mowing regimes, creation of a wetland habitat, thinning of the canopy over the waterways, planting of copses and re-establishing historic hedgerows, health and safety work on trees and extensive restoration works on the river, stream and ditch network.

The native species found on the site were outlined, including bats, badgers, reptiles, 36 species of bird, amphibians and invertebrates. A number of invasive non-indigenous species were also present on the site and these would be dealt with appropriately.

Access and Infrastructure to the site was a key part of the Plan. Provision included parking facilities, clear signage, all weather paths, fencing and gates, picnic benches and seating, installation of a trim trail/nature trail and deconstruction of the golf course infrastructure.

The Board was advised of the timeline for the Management Plan. It was proposed that consultation on the Interim Plan would be undertaken in September, 2021, with a view to appoint a permanent SANG operator in April 2022. The ten year plan would then be developed in conjunction with the successful party.

The Board discussed the Interim Plan and raised a number of points, including:

- The Café/Visitors Centre – It was advised that this would not be included in the Plan but would be developed in parallel to it. The café would be operated on a lease basis and consideration would be given to similar offers in the local area to ensure best practice. It was felt important to make the most from the facility and offer multiple uses and ensure best value for money. Access for volunteers would also need to be considered.
- Funding – it was noted that developers' contributions would make up some of the funding to run the site but other funding would be sought and the Environment Agency had provided £45,000 towards some of the proposed developments.
- Pedestrian Crossing – it was noted that the crossing would be signal operated.

- Wheelchair access – the need to ensure access for all would be reflected in the Plan.
- Connectivity – It was noted that work was underway to connect the Southwood Country Park and Southwood Woodland. However, connectivity with sites further afield would be dealt with through the forthcoming Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan and the Green Infrastructure Strategy which were in their development stages.

The Board **ENDORSED** the Southwood Country Park Interim Management Plan and thanked Ms Lucas for her presentation. It was also noted that, should Members have any further comments or questions relating to the Plan, these should be referred to Ms Lucas or Mr. Mills.

## 12. **WORK PLAN**

The Board **NOTED** the current Work Plan and were advised of an in person workshop that would be taking place on September 9th, 2021, on the civic element of the Farnborough Civic Hub development.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm.

CLLR J.B. CANTY (CHAIRMAN)

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