

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 18th March, 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Ann Isherwood, Mark Shurmer and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham and Kerry Somers

79. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Prior to consideration of the first item of the agenda, the Chair thanked all Members of the Committee for their hard work during the municipal year. He expressed particular thanks to Councillor Y. Smith and Councillor M. Shurmer who were standing down from their roles of Councillors and wished them well for the future.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Fry.

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any Party Whip.

81. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 18th March 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

82. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no registered public speakers on this occasion.

83. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

The Chair introduced the item in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2020-2021 and read out the Chair's Foreword to provide a summary of the Committee's work over the municipal year.

"Over the last year it has been a pleasure to be the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It has been a good year as there has been a lot of cross-party working. This is significant in a number of different ways; the importance of cross-party decision-making when representing the community as a whole, in addition it shows that by working together in partnership we can move things forward as a Council. The majority of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were cross-party recommendations.

It is noted that there have been two specific Task Groups established during the year the Dementia Task Group and the Parking on Unicorn Hill Task Group. We have had in-depth group discussions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which have resulted in these task groups being set up. It is worth noting that the Parking on Unicorn Hill Task Group was set up as a result in closer working with the Leader of the Council. Frequently we discussed individual items put forward by the whole Committee and raised issues that mattered to the community.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee used its powers to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive Committee as well as to pre-scrutinise items before the Executive Committee made a decision.

During the year, training was provided to reinforce Members' understanding and skills to undertake scrutiny effectively. Since that training was delivered, we've had some really constructive, apolitical meetings.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who have contributed their time and energy to make this a successful year for Overview and Scrutiny.

It has been a difficult year during lockdown with the meetings being online. However, we have got through this and continued with the job in hand. Thanks also go to Andy Fry, Jenny Wheeler as well as to Councillor Mike Chalk who has provide excellent written updates on the work of the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny sub-Committees during the year.

I am proud that I have been able to continue in my role as Chair.

I would also like to pay tribute to Councillor Pattie Hill and the work and dedication she put in during her time on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.”

During this item, the Chair thanked Councillor M. Chalk for his work in chairing the Dementia Task Group and Councillor P. Fleming for chairing the Parking on Unicorn Hill Task Group. He also thanked the Democratic Services Officer for the hard work undertaken in preparation of the report.

RESOLVED that

the report was noted.

84. RECOMMENDATION TRACKER UPDATE

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Recommendation Tracker Update and advised that this was a regular update from officers in respect of the recommendations that had been made by the Committee in this, and previous municipal years. She explained that if Members had any questions regarding the update, they could request further clarification from officers.

Councillor M. Shurmer queried the recommendation regarding the Parking Enforcement Task Group. He was particularly interested in whether the parking enforcement scoped trial had taken place

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outside schools and if it had taken place, what had been the results. The Democratic Services Officer undertook to obtaining further clarification from the Environmental Services Manager and circulate the response to Members accordingly.

RESOLVED that

the Recommendation Tracker Update be noted.

85. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Monday 22nd January 2021.

The latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme for the period 1st April to 31st July 2021 was also considered by the Committee.

Members requested that the following items be placed on the Committee's Work Programme for consideration in the new municipal year:

- Future Plans for Auxerre House
- Church Green Conservation Area
- Endorsement of Proposals for the Redevelopment of Matchborough and Winyates for the Purposes of Public Consultation
- Asset Management Strategy and investment programme for council housing stock
- Redditch Town Centre Regeneration Business Cases.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday, 22nd February 2021 be noted; and**
- 2) the content of the Executive Committee's Work Programme for the period 1st April to 31st July 2021 be noted.**

86. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Officer present informed Members that any items selected for pre-scrutiny from the Executive Committee Work Programme would be placed on to the Committee's Work Programme for consideration at future meetings. It was also highlighted that an update in respect of E-Scooters and a 6-monthly update regarding the Redditch Town Deal as agreed at a previous meeting of the Committee had also been included on the Committee's Work Programme.

Councillor M. Shurmer suggested that a possible work programme item that might need to be added for future consideration would be Housing Options as it seemed that this had been an area of increased concern for some residents during the pandemic.

Members queried the item regarding the Endorsement of Proposals for the Redevelopment of Matchborough and Winyates for the Purposes of Public Consultation. The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that during consideration of this item at the Executive Committee meeting officers would be seeking endorsement of the proposals prior to the consultation.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

87. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS

The following updates were provided in respect of the work of the Scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups:

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler

Councillor Wheeler advised the Committee that the final meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had taken place on 17th March 2021. During that meeting, the group had interviewed Officers summarising Covid-19 grant funding received and distributed during the pandemic. In addition to

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this, Professor Peter Latchford attended the meeting to update Members on the Council's progress on commercialism. The Committee was informed that during this meeting, the Head of Finance and Customer Services presented the Third Quarter Monitoring Update in respect of the Council's Budget and highlighted to Members that the Section 24 had been removed.

Councillor Wheeler took the opportunity to thank Councillors J. Fisher and Y. Smith for all of their contributions to the Working Group during their time as Members of the Council.

b) Dementia Task Group – Chair, Councillor Michael Chalk

Councillor Chalk explained that the group were due to meet on 25th March 2021 when a representative from Age UK would be in attendance primarily to discuss their work with veterans diagnosed with Dementia in the Borough.

During consideration of this update Members were advised that it was unlikely that the group would be able to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18th March 2021 as originally intended. Therefore, the Chair agreed that the Dementia Task Group be afforded an extension to their investigation and that a report be considered at the meeting due to be held in June 2021.

c) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Andrew Fry

The Chair updated the Committee in the absence of Councillor Fry and informed Members that no meeting had taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.

d) Unicorn Hill Task Group – Chair, Councillor Peter Fleming

Councillor Fleming informed the Committee that the Short, Sharp Review Group had met on 3rd March 2021 and had had a very productive meeting. The next meeting was due to take place on 30th March 2021 when Members would interview Councillor M. Dormer as the Topic Proposer of the

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Short, Sharp Review. The Chair thanked Members of the Group for a successful meeting and for the cross-party working that was taking place as part of the review.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Dementia Task Group be extended until June 2021; and**
- 2) the update reports be noted.**

88. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

In addition to his written reports, Councillor Michael Chalk provided a verbal update in respect of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), which had been published as part of the meeting agenda. During the update Members were informed that, as the meetings were public, the YouTube live streams were all available online should Members wish to watch them to further understand the work of the External Scrutiny Bodies.

Before the close of the meeting the Chair took the opportunity to thank all the Members of the Committee, Democratic Services Officers and the I.T. Support Staff who had worked so hard behind the scenes to enable the virtual meetings to take place during the pandemic.

Councillor S. Akbar also requested to speak and in doing so thanked Councillor J. Baker for successfully undertaking his role as Chair for the municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the External Scrutiny Bodies Update Reports be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm
and closed at 6.34 pm