



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5th December, 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry and Jennifer Wheeler

Also Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships
Councillor Julian Grubb, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Officers:

Helen Broughton, Andy Bywater, Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley and Rebecca Pritchett

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and J Gresham

56. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mark Shurmer.

Members noted that Councillors Joanne Beecham and Andrew Fry would be arriving late.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

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Chair

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58. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday 7th November 2019 be held as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

59. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no registered public speakers on this occasion.

60. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ANNUAL REPORT

The North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager presented the Civil Contingencies Annual Report. The following was highlighted for Members' consideration: -

- Corporate Assets had been reviewed.
- Business Continuity Plans had been updated across all service areas.
- The Rest Centre Plan had been updated and a test carried out. The test highlighted some errors in the plan which needed to be updated and Officers had undertaken to do that.
- Officers attended a multi-agency response exercise at the West Midlands Safari Park.

The Chair asked Councillor Grubb, as Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services if there was anything further he would like to add and Councillor Grubb stated that he regularly met with Officers to ensure that contingency plans were in place and he was happy that the Council would be prepared in an emergency situation.

Members asked where they could find the Business Continuity Plans and Officers confirmed that they were available on The Orb (the Council's intranet).

Members also asked whether the high risk, frontline employees were routinely vaccinated against disease. Officers confirmed that frontline employees were not routinely vaccinated by the Council but were encouraged to be vaccinated and that it came down to the personal responsibility of employees.

Members questioned what errors had been highlighted in the Rest Centre Plan test. Officers confirmed that this had primarily been the

inclusion of old contact details within the Plan documentation which needed to be updated. However, this had been mitigated by reviewing the plan on a monthly basis and by asking staff to update their details if there were any changes.

61. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Officers presented the Redditch Partnership Annual Report. The following was highlighted for Members' consideration:

- Redditch Partnership was made up from a range of partner organisations in Redditch who identified priorities for Redditch.
- The priorities were:
 - Health Inequalities
 - Education attainment, school readiness and raising aspirations of young people
 - The economy of Redditch with a focus on providing a larger and more diverse job offer.
 - Lead on transformation change of services for citizens in Redditch.
- Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT) sat underneath the Redditch Partnership and was operational.
- The Redditch Partnership was working with local businesses to assess the skills available in Redditch and send mentors into local schools to work with students.
- Redditch Partnership provided, where possible, information and data about Redditch. This included a useful tool which enabled users to find data at small area geographies.
- The Wellbeing in Partnership Newsletter which provided information to partners and locally elected Members about activity in their local area was distributed on a monthly basis.
- The Knowledge Bank, containing information about local Voluntary and Community Sector Groups and community services, was available and partners could add their details if they made a request.

62. SKILLS IN THE LOCAL WORKFORCE - PRESENTATION

Officers presented information about Skills in the Local Workforce and a summary of key labour market issues for Redditch. The following points were highlighted for Members' consideration.

- Officers informed Members that Redditch was above the national average for employment with levels reaching 86.4% employment compared to the national average of 74.9%.
- Redditch wages were lower than the national average.

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- In Redditch there was a low uptake of education post NVQ Level 4.
- Officers were working hard with local schools and businesses to promote further education and provide mentor opportunities in schools in Redditch. Redditch schools however were less engaged than schools around the rest of the County.
- A programme called 'Opening Doors to Business' which gave pupils the opportunity to work with local businesses and services to help engage with young people.

The Chair asked Councillor Dormer, as Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships if there was anything further he would like to add. Councillor Dormer stated that all the work that had been done so far was a step in the right direction but more still needed to be done.

Members questioned what more could be done and Officers confirmed that there had needed to be more engagement with local schools.

Officers noted that the 10K Plus Programme was being rolled out by Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) to encourage residents achieve a higher level of qualifications at NVQ level 3. This was because the area was performing particularly badly at this level, which represented the gateway to higher level technical and academic education.

Members questioned why there were such low aspirations in the Borough. Officers explained that this is historically to do with lack of opportunity and low levels of engagement with young people and some local schools in the Borough and explained that Members could work with the local schools in their constituency to increase the engagement.

Members requested clarification on the data provided in the presentation as follows:

- Providing a breakdown of the types of employment in Redditch.
- Clarifying how many hours constituted 'employed'?
- Clarifying how many people were on zero hours contracts?
- Providing information to Members regarding the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) '10K Plus' programme.

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Members discussed the importance of understanding the cost of equipment in schools and limitations on funding. Reference was also made to the need for higher engagement with parents of students.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Officers should provide clarification on the data provided in the skills presentation; and**
- 2) **Officers should be invited back to present again on the Skills in the Workforce data in due course.**

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

The Committee discussed the content of the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme and identified the following items for pre-decision scrutiny:

- Essential Living Fund.
- Support to the Voluntary and Community Sector 2020/21
- Homes England Asset Transfer.
- Matchborough and Winyates District Centres – Procurement Process to Secure a Development Partner.
- Leisure and Cultural Strategy

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11th November 2019 be noted; and**
- 2) **the items identified from the Executive Committee's Work Programme for pre-scrutiny, as detailed in the preamble above, be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.**

64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the items that had been identified for pre-scrutiny earlier in the meeting would be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

65. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

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The Chair thanked Councillor Dormer and Kevin Dicks for formalising the Quarterly meetings between the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Leader and Chief Executive.

66. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - CHAIR'S UPDATE REPORT

Councillor Wheeler updated Members on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Wheeler confirmed that there had been a meeting in September where Members had been given a presentation on the latest work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Redditch. Following the meeting Members of the Panel had received the 'Good Neighbours Handbook'.

RESOLVED that

the update on the meeting be noted.

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

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

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

Councillor Wheeler explained that the recommendations made by the group in November had all been accepted at Executive. Councillor Wheeler explained that Professor Peter Latchford OBE from Black Radley had delivered a presentation to the group in respect of commercialism at the latest meeting of the group. Members of the group had found this to be very useful and had agreed that a similar briefing to all Members on the subject of commercialism would be helpful towards the end of January 2020 in order to help inform Members' decisions in respect of the budget.

b) Parking Enforcement Task Group – Chair, Councillor Mark Shurmer

Officers explained that there would be no further meetings of the group until after the general election due to be held on 12th December 2019.

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

Councillor Fry advised that the last meeting of the group had been cancelled and suggested a change in the way the meetings were carried out. Members were advised that that meetings had been booked until May 2020.

- d) Suicide Prevention Task Group – Chair, Councillor Debbie Chance

Councillor Chance explained that there had been no meetings since the previous meeting of the Committee. There was a meeting planned for 17th December 2019 where there would be a presentation on mental health from NHS practitioners.

RECOMMENDED that

there should be an all Member briefing from Black Radley in respect of commercialism in January 2020.

68. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Councillor Chalk updated the Committee in respect of the latest meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He informed the Committee that a draft governance and strategy document was in the process of being created by Councillor Trickett of Birmingham City Council.

Councillor Chalk apologised to the Committee as he had been unable to attend the latest meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.50 pm