

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 9th June, 2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Joanna Kane (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Sid Khan and Timothy Pearman

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Deb Poole

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

7. COUNCIL PLAN (RECOVERY AND RESTORATION PLAN)

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the report in respect of Council Plan (Recovery and Restoration Plan). During consideration of this report, Members were informed that the current Council Plan was developed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, a review of the priorities contained within the Plan was undertaken in 2021. As a result of this review, an Addendum was produced which was designed to sit alongside the approved Council Plan. The Addendum included the previous priorities, which were still considered fit for purpose, however more prominence was given to the Green Thread. This Addendum would provide an intermediary position prior to the review of the Council Plan due to take place in 2024.

Following the presentation of the report Members queried the following areas:

- The procurement of an energy advice service – It was clarified that Act On Energy had recently been procured by

Chair

the Council to provide residents with information, advice and support in managing and reducing energy costs.

- Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) – Members were informed that in this instance, the assets referred to within the report were ‘human resources’ within a community rather than ‘physical’ assets. It was clarified that the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) had secured funding for three Community Development Officers to work within the identified wards to help build on the strengths and skills already present within those communities.
- The allocation of Safer Streets Funding – Members were interested in better understanding the rationale behind the choice of Woodrow as the recipient of the funding and whether this kind of funding would be made available to other wards in the future. Officers explained that this funding was a Central Government initiative that was linked to specific funding criteria. It was reported that a partner based approach had been undertaken when bidding for the funding and data and evidence collected as part of the bidding process had to highlight a clear indication of need within the ward. Officers acknowledged that this kind of funding would be beneficial to other wards however due to the availability of grants and funding and the specific nature of the criteria this was not possible.
- Redeployable Cameras – Members were informed that the use of redeployable cameras were used in areas of specific need and that there were criteria, set out by the Police and Crime Commissioner, that needed to be met in order to redeploy them to specific areas. Officers undertook to contact the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager to provide further information regarding this to Members.
- ❖ *Green Thread – It was requested that a potential additional success measure in terms of the Green Thread should be increased access to brown garden waste bins within the Borough. Members noted that residents currently had no access to these bins and that this should be made a priority for the future. It was acknowledged that this was a very popular service and needed to be expanded to benefit the residents. The Committee agreed that this issue needed to be highlighted to the Executive Committee for them to consider for the future.*

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- Face-to face interaction with officers within the Council – Members highlighted that some residents had raised concerns with difficulties in accessing face-to-face interactions with Officers within the Council, particularly in respect of Housing. Officers noted that a project looking at the way in which Customer Services worked was currently being undertaken and that it was envisaged that any changes implemented would enable residents to access more general advice and guidance in one place rather than having to contact multiple officers. Some Members commented that although some residents were happy with a more digital way of accessing Council services there would be residents that wished to speak to officers in person and that this should be considered when looking at services for the future.
- Rough Sleepers – Members were informed that the number of rough sleepers within the Borough were identified as part of a count on a particular night. Therefore, the information included within the Recovery and Restoration Plan was a snapshot in time and could change. Officers outlined to the Committee that the Housing Options Team provided significant support to those in need within Redditch. This support included finding permanent accommodation to those who were rough sleeping.
- ❖ *Recruitment and Retention of Staff – Members commented on the priority of High Quality Services included in the Council Plan Addendum. It was noted that although it was important to recruit more staff, equally important was the retention of staff. Particularly at the current time when it was difficult to recruit staff to vacancies, within the Public Sector. This was acknowledged by the Officers present and Members were informed that the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy was undertaking a piece of work looking at workforce planning and the development of skills for the future. It was agreed by Members that this was another area to highlight to the Executive Committee for consideration.*

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RECOMMENDED that

subject to the concerns raised, as detailed in the preamble above, regarding the Garden Waste Service and the future retention of Council staff, being noted by the Executive Committee for future inclusion in the Council Plan

- 1) The Council Plan Addendum 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved and included alongside the current RBC Council Plan 2020/24; and**
- 2) The Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 2, be agreed and closed.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.02 pm