

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Cade, Eccleson, Gillias, Mahoney, Mrs O'Rourke, Picker and Roodhouse

Officers:

Mannie Ketley (Executive Director), Aftab Razzaq (Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager/Monitoring Officer) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED THAT - Councillor Mahoney be appointed Chair of the Committee for the 2020/21 municipal year.

(Whereupon Councillor Mahoney took the Chair)

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED THAT - Councillor Gillias be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2020/21 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Mrs New.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 5) concerning a summary of the work programmes from 2019/20 for the Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The standing items listed in the appendix to the report that were previously allocated to the Communities and Resources and the Environment and Growth Scrutiny Committees, and regularly considered, would be included in the work programme:

- Holding the Executive to account - Performance and future strategy. Discussion with the Leader and Executive Director and with the four portfolio holders for Corporate Resources, Communities and Homes, Growth and Investment and Environment and Public Realm.
- Annual review of Crime and Disorder.
- Finance and Performance monitoring.

The Committee reviewed the historic items listed on page 2 of the appendix marked as 'to be allocated or carried forward to 2020/21' to determine whether any should be carried forward for review in the longer term.

During discussion, the following points were made:

- A light touch review of housing voids would be worthwhile to find out how well this was operating. If the committee found further work was required a short-term task group could be set up.
- The tenancies of non-council properties would be a separate topic to be considered under the heading of partnership working.
- Litter and fly tipping were issues that had increased substantially. Members commented on the affect this problem had on residents and their wellbeing. It was noted that a new Cabinet working party had recently been appointed to carry out this work. A request could be made that the working party share their findings and recommendations with the Committee prior to any final decision making.
- An outline scope for each topic would be useful to assist the Committee in deciding whether they should be progressed further.
- A suggestion was made that the Committee could receive updates for the progress reports of past review outcomes.
- Self-Build Plots could be passed to the Asset Management Members' Working Group to link to the work they were carrying out on land development.
- The Waste Management Review Working Party had not met for some time and the topic of waste and recycling levels could be undertaken there and reported back to this Committee.
- Air quality monitoring was another topic that could be passed onto a current working party such as the Climate Emergency Working Party.
- Health and wellbeing initiatives was suggested as a key topic to take forward as particularly relevant at the current time.
- The future direction for the Borough was unclear making it difficult for the Committee to plan.
- In the future, it was important that parish councils and the community were involved in submitting review topics.
- It was noted that review topics submitted for consideration would be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair. A clear description of these would be useful at the next meeting.

It was agreed that officers would return to the next meeting of the Committee with a brief synopsis against all the scrutiny items in the context of the way the organisation was currently operating. This would allow the Committee to decide on items that it considered worthwhile to progress, depending on capacity and the level of value that could be added.

It was important to focus on work where scrutiny could add value at this time.

Officers would indicate alternative working groups for Committee to determine whether that was the most appropriate route.

The report outlined the four pillars for recovery for the Committee to consider, based on the priority areas under each of the overarching recovery themes. Officers undertook to provide the Committee with a steer of current items that would be useful for scrutiny to consider that fell within the remit of supporting the Council's recovery programme and the strategy moving forward.

This approach would enable the Committee to decide whether to incorporate or prioritise items in the new work programme.

It was acknowledged that this was a significant period of change. Having a longer-term rolling work programme that was assessed on a regular basis would allow scrutiny to become more flexible. It was important to carefully prioritise items and not commit too early ensuring that resources were retained for more urgent work.

Improved ways of working with the Executive would be explored and would include regular dialogue to engage at an early stage and have a clear sense of work and priorities on the horizon.

RESOLVED THAT – the following items be included for consideration at next meeting scheduled to be held on 14 December 2020:

- (1) to receive a synopsis for each scrutiny item that had been carried over from the 2019/20 committees work programmes;
- (2) agree on any items to be passed to alternative working groups;
- (3) to consider the key priorities and objectives that fall under the overarching pillars for recovery to identify possible review topics; and
- (4) agree a forward rolling work programme.

CHAIR