

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2020

Present

Councillor: J Matthews (Chairman)

Councillors: S Hunt (Vice-Chairman), A Agate, S Dolan, D Evans, G Hill, T Maroney and B Moulard

39 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Johnson and J May.

40 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

41 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed members that he had been invited to sit on the Cabinet Liaison Panel responsible for the recovery strategy in his capacity as Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He would keep the Committee updated as this work progressed.

42 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

43 Committee Training

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report. He explained that since the Committee had been formed in September 2019 that had received one training session and he was seeking the views of the Committee on what training they thought would be of benefit to them.

He explained to the committee that budget for all councillor training was 10k for the whole year. A list of possible sources from training was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

He confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny training for the whole year out of the 10k would be 1K to 150K.

Councillors asked that officers look at the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CFPS) who appeared to offer a wide range of training including 3 xxx modules.

Councillors also suggested training on financial scrutiny.

It was also suggested that other Councillors be invited to the training as they might find it useful and also to invite members of Cabinet.

Councillors asked if there was value in exploring finding a scrutiny officer from outside of the Council to undertake training.

Councillors also asked that consideration be given to appointing a dedicate scrutiny officer, the reason being how could the committee undertake their work without a dedicated officer to support them.

The question was also raised as to whether the training could be virtual or in a specific location i.e. Penns Place.

The Committee agreed that officers should look at the modules from CFPS and prepare a draft work programme with costs.

Following a discussion, the report was **NOTED**.

44 Scrutiny Work Programme

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report. He explained that the Committee had received a number of briefings in the last year and had indicated that some of them should come back to the committee for future scrutiny. These were reflected in the work programme.

The Committee had also received two referrals for scrutiny from Cabinet, these were the Digital Strategy and the Covid-19 Response Plan. He reminded the committee that the Covid-19 Response Plan was the next item on the agenda.

The Digital Strategy included the use of remote meetings and would be adopted by Council in due course.

The work programme was a live document and could be amended at any time if another important piece of work needed to be undertaken by the Committee. He also drew the Committees attention to the methodology columns in the table which showed a number of ways of approaching the work.

Councillors agreed that it was important to prioritise the work and saw the most important as being the Covid-19 Response Report, Digital Strategy and the Property Portfolio.

Cllr Hunt said that it was important to establish a Task & Finish Group on the Covid-19 Response Plan as the committee needed to give a response to Cabinet before the Cabinet meeting on 9 July 2020.

Cllr Maroney has raised a list of options some of which, Metro Inns and Woolmer Trading Estate he believed could be covered in the Property Portfolio Task & Finish Group. He had also asked for the Investment Plan for Whitehill and Bordon to be added to the work programme ad believed this could be covered under the Whitehill & Bordon review.

Cllr Dolan asked if a review of the future budget and it was confirmed that quarterly and half yearly reviews could be added to the work programme under statutory items.

Cllr Hunt requested that the Committee invite the Leader of the council to a meeting of the Council to make a presentation on his vision and strategy for the disposal of Penns Place.

The Chief Finance Officer reminded the Committee that the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny had been invited to sit on the Cabinet Liaison Recovery Board and the future of Penns place was part of the full recovery programme.

Cllr Matthews confirmed he would bring any information to the committee.

Cllr Maroney asked if members of Whitehill Town Council could be invited to sit on the Task & Finish Group when Whitehill & Bordon was reviewed. He was informed that the membership Groups had be District Councillors only, however they could be invited to present information to the group during their work.

The Committee agreed that the following items be put in the following priority onto the work programme

- Covid-19 Response Plan
- Covid-19 Recovery Plan
- Digital Strategy
- Property Portfolio
- Whitehill & Bordon

The following items to be removed

- Capita Briefing
- Placemaking Strategy
- Welfare & Wellbeing Strategy

Cllr Hunt proposed that the Committee form three separate Task & Finish Groups ideally with different Councillors taken from the O & S Committee to liaise with all relevant officers and report back. The three topics for consideration were Contribution to Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan, Digital Strategy and Property Portfolio.

Cllr Maroney seconded the proposal.

The committee voted on the proposal and proposal was carried 8 Councillors voting for the proposal, no Councillors voting against and no Councillors abstaining.

Following the vote, the Committee agreed to the membership of the Task & Finish Groups.

Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plans

Cllr S Dolan

Cllr G Hill
Cllr T Maroney

Digital Strategy

Cllr A Agate
Cllr S Hunt
Cllr J Matthews
Cllr B Moulard
Cllr P Wigman

Property Portfolio

Cllr S Hunt
Cllr T Maroney
Cllr P Wigman

The Democratic Services Officer was asked to contact the members not at the meeting and invite them to sit on one of the Task & Finish Groups.

The groups would hold virtual meeting and agree its own terms of reference and work plans and bring reports and updates on their progress back to the Committee.

The Task & Finish Groups would be supported by a Democratic Services Officer.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the work programme for 2020/21 be AGREED.

45 Response to Coronavirus / COVID-19 Pandemic

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report and explained that the Appendix to the report was the draft Cabinet report setting out the Councils response to the pandemic to date. As guidance was changing on a daily basis it was important that the information in the report was up to date.

The report would be going to Cabinet on 9 July and he would ask the Leader to invite Cllr Matthews as Chairman of the Committee to address Cabinet and give the Committee's initial thoughts on the document.

The document was lengthy and very detailed. He drew the committee's attention to paragraph 3.1 of the exempt report which was the Executive Summary.

The Committee in considering its work programme had already established a Task & Finish Group to review this document and the Covid-19 Recovery.

Councillors thought it was an excellent report and very detailed

Councillors were concerned that the Task & Finish Group only had 2 weeks to respond. The committee agreed that the group would provide the Chairman with their initial thoughts and then continue to work on the programme.

Members of the committee were asked to submit their initial thoughts on the document to the group.

Councillors endorsed the approach being taken.

Following the discussion, the report was NOTED.

46 Consideration of any Executive Decision called in to the Committee (if applicable)

here were no Executive Decisions to consider.

47 Exclusion of the Press and Public

48 Consideration of Matters Arising from Executive Decisions Relating to Exempt Items (if applicable)

There were no exempt Cabinet Decisions to consider.

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm