

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JULY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Leytham (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Eagland, Evans, Grange, A Little, Parton-Hughes, Powell, Robertson, Silvester-Hall, Mrs Tranter, Warburton and M Wilcox

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Binney.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee was reminded of their terms of reference as written in the Council's Constitution. It was noted that there was the Councillor Call for Action mechanism if any Member required the Committee to consider local matters in their wards and it was agreed to issue guidance on that and Executive decision Call-Ins to Members.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference be noted.

4 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received their work programme and Members were asked what areas they felt required focus.

It was requested that information as to what actions and progress had been made by the Council since declaring a Climate Emergency be reported as it was felt that. It was noted that a briefing paper would be forthcoming but it was hoped for this to be as soon as possible. It was noted that there was funding available however it was noted that the lead officer had left the authority and it was envisioned that once the new lead had got up to speed with matters, work would move forward. It was reported that LocalGov had a toolkit regarding Climate Change and it was suggested that it be looked into further. Similarly, it was reported that the LGA had a number of workbooks that could be worked through.

Clarity was given as to how the reporting from and to the Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee at Staffordshire County Council would happen. Members were reminded that Cllr Leytham was our representative on that Committee and would feedback any concerns from the LDC Committee and vice versa.

It was noted by the Committee that there would be a new model Code of Conduct however it reported that under the Constitution, the Audit & Member Standards Committee was the agreed the body to formally consider the code before Full Council approval.

Clarity was sought regarding the terms of reference of the Lichfield City Masterplan Task Group and it was noted that the group would be considering the many strategies that would make up the larger Masterplan and those views fed into the project board before Cabinet consideration as well as reported to the O&S Committee.

Overview of the Local Plan was discussed and it was requested that information be sought regarding the coloration between where there was need and where sites were being allocated for such requirements of employment as well as housing, especially affordable housing. It was noted that there was an established task group that considered Local Plan matters and this could be raised there.

Disabled Facilities Grants was considered and it noted that a new Housing Assistance Policy had been approved however there was still concern on performance of the service provider and the Committee wished to monitor this matter closely. It was agreed to initially receive a briefing paper on performance of the new policy and if there were still concerns, to establish a Member Task Group to investigate further.

It was noted by the Committee that there had been a review of the Planning Service however this was with the scope of operational matters for example staffing and therefore for the Head of Service and Head of Paid Service to consider and deal with. It was requested that if there were any other issues that could benefit from O&S input, this should be allowed. There was some concern that the report, and information contained within, had not been available to Members. It was also suggested that the Committee look at the outputs of the Service and any impact on residents and it was noted that as a continuation from the previous Committee structure, it would be expected that this Committee still receive the Development Management Performance briefing papers. It was noted that any staffing matters could be dealt with by the Employment Committee.

The other items as contained in the work programme were noted or agreed to receive further information before planning further.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be agreed and amended as appropriate.

5 HEALTH MATTERS

The Committee received an update from the Staffordshire County Council's (SCC) Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that Councillor Leytham was continuing as the Lichfield District representative on the Committee and as such received questions as to what had been discussed at the SCC meetings. It was asked if there was information from each area regarding access to GP provision and it was reported that they received a presentation from the CCG but no real data or outcomes were noted except that it was difficult to provide a GP service due to Covid-19.

It was requested that Cllr Leytham raises the problems experienced by residents regarding public transport to Derby hospital especially to attend appointments. It was reported that this was especially difficult for early outpatient appointments as there bus needed to arrive in Derby left at 7am and no circulars to the Lichfield main bus station were in operation. It was felt that current bus timetables were not taking this need into consideration. It was noted that the local MPs could be lobbied if required to raise this issue and the Committee could do this collectively. It was also agreed for Cllr Leytham to raise this at the SCC Committee.

RESOLVED: That the information received be noted and concerns or issues as raised be passed to the County Council.

6 SCHEME OF DELEGATION REVIEW

The Committee received a draft revised Scheme of Delegation to give views before formal approval at Full Council. It was asked whether local Councillors were informed of all licence applications under the Licensing Act 2011 when received and it was reported that Officers would get back to the Committee with this answer. It was also asked who the lead Officer was

responsibility for property sales and it was reported that it was the Head of Corporate Services unless specific to the service but the Council was currently transitioning to a Corporate Landlord approach.

It was noted that the document was a source of reference for Officers as to where the authority to make decisions lay whether at Full Council, Executive or Quasi Judicial Committee level as well as operational matters at Head of Paid Service or Head of Service level.

It was requested that definitions be highlighted if required for example what significant objections actually means when dealing with Planning applications. It was noted that guidance around Planning decision making was being updated.

RESOLVED: That the views be incorporated into the final draft Scheme of Delegation before recommended for approval by Full Council.

7 MEMBER TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Committee received updates from current Member Task groups and it was agreed that the note from task groups would be included in for this Committee in future.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.25 pm)

CHAIR