

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

23 JUNE 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Norman (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Spruce, Warfield and S Wilcox.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Cox, Eadie, Pullen, Smith and A. Yeates attended the meeting).

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Banevisius, Tapper and White.

Councillor Norman, on behalf of the Committee wished to record thanks to Councillor A. Little for his work and chairmanship over the past municipal year.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated. Subject to the addition of Cabinet Members in attendance and typographical errors rectified, the Committee agreed that they were a correct record.

RESOLVED: That, subject to amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record.

39 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered and when asked, it was noted that it would be confirmed after the meeting that the Money Matters Financial Performance report was sent as a briefing paper.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted and updated were necessary.

40 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a report on the draft Engagement Strategy that had been developed using the results of a recent review of the Council's approach to communications as well as a range of best practice of other authorities and organisations.

It was reported that communications should be integral to all that the Council does and be a two way process with engagement with all.

Committee was in agreement that there should be a strategy and welcomed the development of one however there were some concerns and feedback on the current draft as presented.

It was considered by some of the Committee to a too “off the shelf” strategy in its current form and not parochial or reflective to Lichfield district. There were some difference of opinion on how the Council was currently viewed with some feeling that people held the Council in high regard until recently with issues like Friarsgate and other Members felt that there had been a low opinion of the Council until the good management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was unease that the aim of the strategy seemed focused on the enhancement of the reputation and brand of the Council although it was recognised that there was reference to understanding the communication needs of the community. It was felt that it should be recognised when something has gone wrong and that communicated without any “spin”.

The segmentation of communities was discussed and overall considered a good approach however it was felt it did not go far enough and commitment should be made to specifically include areas such as the black community, young people as well as disadvantaged. It was noted that the suggested groups in the strategy was at the basic level with more detail to be included. It was requested that a press release be sent to state that the Council would be actively engaging with minority groups.

There was concern that the strategy being a four year plan was too long but it was noted that it was a clear three step process

It was felt that measuring social media followers was not relevant and would not give any meaningful information.

RESOLVED: That the views given by the Committee on the draft Engagement Strategy be considered by Cabinet.

41 DELIVERY PLAN AND CORPORATE INDICATORS

The Committee received a report on the Council's new Delivery Plan and draft Corporate Indicators which followed the now approved Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

The Committee commended Officers for creating a concise report as well as undertaking wide consultation, during the development of the Strategic Plan, to consider what outcomes were desired by residents and other stakeholders.

It was noted that the highest risk recorded in the document was the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the Council's capacity to deliver the plan. It was noted that the documents could be adapted and should be fluid in nature to take account of the ever changing situation. It was reported that consideration had already been given and although there were many important priorities, focus was on the urgent ones to ensure they were deliverable. It was felt that the Committee should include an item on the impact of the pandemic on the work programme. It was noted that it was planned to discuss the Covid-19 recovery plan at an Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Group to ensure there was no duplication of work.

Other items were raised as important for the Cabinet to keep focus on including Disabled Facilities Grants as issues were still being experienced. It was reported that ongoing discussions were being held with the providers on these concerns.

It was requested that report templates be amended and the Environmental Impact section be changed to Climate Change to help identify and make clearer what had been considered to help fight the climate emergency and meet the approved Council motion. It was also requested that a section on Local Procurement be added and it was noted that local procurement would be part of the forthcoming Procurement Scheme. It was agreed to consider the report templates further following these raised points.

It was asked what the timeline and process was to have baseline and target data for the plan available and it was reported that it was planned for the end of quarter 3 to quarter 4 of this year as the pandemic situation had meant some of the data had changed or was still awaiting from stakeholders. It was noted that it was felt best to still bring this report to O&S now as a placeholder and for the Committee to review when that data was available.

RESOLVED: That the Delivery Plan and underpinning Corporate Indicators be approved and reviewed by the Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee when baseline and target data is available.

(The Meeting closed at 6.54 pm)

CHAIRMAN