

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 5 July 2021

Councillor Liz Clunie (Chair)

Councillor Paul Feeney	Councillor Mike Hope
Councillor Sandra Barnes	Councillor Marje Paling
Councillor Michael Boyle	Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Jim Creamer	Councillor Sam Smith
Councillor Andrew Ellwood	Councillor Paul Wilkinson
Councillor Jennifer Hemingway	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Simon Murray

Officers in Attendance: A Davey and A Dubberley

Guests in Attendance Councillor Clarke, Councillor Roxanne Ellis and
Councillor Payne

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Murray.

2 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None.

4 PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER ATTENDANCE

Members welcomed Councillors Clarke and Payne to the meeting to examine their portfolios.

Councillor Payne first addressed the question raised in respect of the recent commercialisation internal audit. He said that the Senior Leadership Team had fully accepted the recommendations made in the audit, which mainly concerned the market research undertaken and business case building process for the Pet Cremation Service. He added that he would be happy to talk members through the individual recommendations if that was required.

In respect of the second question about scrutiny involvement in policy formation, the Deputy Leader said that the scrutiny committee was always welcome to engage with portfolio holders at any time on matters relating to their areas of work. He added that work was ongoing, led by the Chief Executive supported by Democratic Services, to produce a more relevant Executive Forward Plan which contained all forthcoming details for the short, medium and long term.

A further question concerning the progress of a climate action plan for the council was also submitted. The Deputy Leader advised that a Carbon baseline assessment and associated draft action plan had been completed using 2019/20 full year data. Additional funding had been allocated for a Climate Change Officer who would be in post shortly to work in partnership with external bodies and departments to deliver the program of work in the plan. The plan arising will be embedded in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Progress is being made on the strategy and an actionable action plan is being prepared for further consultation. It is aimed to have the Carbon Action Plan done by 18 July for consultation with the draft strategy document ready in the autumn.

A final question was asked about covid-19 Restart and Additional Restrictions grants. Information from the Deputy Leader was provided as follows:

- A total of 736 applications for restart grants had been received taking an average of 25.4 days to process with 48 still being processed. A total of 2214 Additional Restart Grant applications (ARG) had been received with 0 outstanding and an average processing time of 19.4 days
- A total of £3,362,042 has been paid out for Restart Grants and £4,504,196 for the ARGs
- The average processing time was a crude estimate calculated using a random sample of 10 applications as accurate data on processing times was not a requirement for the scheme and to produce it would be onerous. The processing time statistics do not take account of applications that were received incomplete or without the required evidence.
- In many cases the Portfolio Holder asked for officers to contact applicants to provide missing application information rather than reject those as per the guidance and exceptional cases were re-considered where the guidance was considered to be too restrictive for example car mechanics.
- Initially the government gave a date of March 2022 for authorities to distribute ARG funds which led to a decision being taken to hold a small proportion of the funding back should the pandemic

worsen. This date was then revised to 30 June 2021 with the requirement for pre-assurance checks to be made on applications. The pre-assurance checks were introduced to combat fraud.

- The Council has paid out nearly £30 million of covid funding to all businesses across the 25 different schemes
- Massive thanks was due to the businesses in Gedling for their efforts in coping with the pandemic and restart period.
- Thanks also to the staff involved in the complex grant allocation process which was done in addition to their normal duties, especially in light of the extra demand for the council tax reduction scheme
- Additional funding was promised to authorities who had used their allocations by 30 June. This had been done leading to a claim of £624,000 which is due for payment in July.
- It was disappointing to note the level of scrutiny given to national decisions for various government funding decisions in comparison to the level of scrutiny given to local authorities' allocation of grants.

In discussion the following was covered:

- A number of members added their thanks to the officers involved in the processing of covid grants which had been gratefully received by businesses.
- The Leader emphasised his thanks to the officers involved in the grants process.
- In respect of commercialisation, the Deputy Leader stated in response to a question that the social value aspect of any business case for a commercial service was very important so long as tax payers' money was spent wisely.

RESOLVED:

To note the information provided and thank Councillors Clarke and Payne for their attendance.

5 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT SCORECARD QUARTER 4 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance and IT, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating members

on the current level of assurance that can be provided against each corporate risk.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) Not to request further information in respect of any of the identified risks.

6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Previous work programme

Members noted the update on the economic development working group and the reply to the question on Policy Advisers.

The Executive response received to the recommendations on the Flooding Review was included in the agenda and noted by the Committee.

Councillor Roxanne Ellis, as Chair of the Domestic Abuse and Access to Emergency Accommodation Working Group gave a brief overview of the group's findings, particularly emphasising the importance of the Sanctuary Scheme. She added that the work involved in domestic violence was very fast paced and ever changing and further examination of the work would be necessary in future. Members of the working group particularly wished to thank David Jayne, Community Safety Officer, for the tireless work he does to support this vital work.

Future work programme

As a result of items appearing on the Executive Forward Plan, it was decided to establish a working group to examine the forthcoming Waste Policy which was in draft and subject to public consultation in the autumn.

Alice Davey, Corporate Director responsible for Waste, explained that the Borough had some challenges in terms of recycling and contamination rates and this policy would be the first step in addressing these.

Councillors Clunie, Hope, Ellwood, Wilkinson, Creamer, Feeney, Boyle and Paling volunteered to be part of the working group which would meet over the summer with a view to making recommendations on the draft policy to Cabinet in the autumn.

Fly tipping was discussed as an area of concern and the committee may in future look at Environmental Enforcement which was a separate topic.

The Forward Plan also made reference to a forthcoming Carbon Reduction Plan. Members were minded to request information on this at the January meeting.

Another issue discussed was the availability of defibrillators in the Borough. Information on this would be brought to the next meeting if it was available.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the information provide in relation to the previous work programme;
- 2) Approve the final recommendations of the Domestic Abuse Working group which would be passed to the relevant portfolio holder;
- 3) Note the response to the Flooding Working Group recommendations;
- 4) Establish a working group to examine the forthcoming Waste Policy as part of the 2021/22 work programme; and
- 5) Include the Caron Reduction Plan and location of defibrillators as topics for consideration at future meetings.

7 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 6.40 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: