

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on 2 November 2020 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Tony Freebody (Chair); Councillors Helen Burton, Jane Lamb, Robin Maxted, Pat Rodohan and Robert Smart.

Officers in attendance:

Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance) and Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer).

12 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020 were submitted and approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting dated 14 September 2020:

Councillor Smart requested that the 'heat' map of houses of multiple occupancy in the borough requested at previous meetings be made available to the Committee.

13 Apologies for absence / declaration of substitute members

Apologies were received from Councillors Sabri and Diplock.

14 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct

There were none.

15 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

16 Urgent items of business

There were none.

17 Right to address the meeting/order of business

There were no requests.

18 Recovery and Reset Programme

Jo Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance, presented the report. During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

Reference to the Community Hub reopening should there be a second lockdown would be updated to reflect the current environment.

The Joint Board had been put in place to deal with those issues that impacted on both authorities jointly, for example staffing. Assets and services that affected Eastbourne Borough Council only would not be dealt with by the Board and would be presented directly to Eastbourne Members.

The £250,000 allocated from the Capital programme was to cover initial costs such as the closure of 1 Grove Road and the removal and relocation of infrastructure. The Council generated approximately £17 million of income from through its tourism activities and this had been impacted on significantly by the Pandemic. There were additional housing and restructuring pressures. A shortfall of £8.9 million was anticipated in the current year (without any assurances of further Government support) with a shortfall of £11.2 million in 2021/2022. It was expected that in the following year there would be a recovery, although with a continued year-on-year shortfall of £3 - £4 million, at which point efficiency savings would be realised and additional income generated.

The Council was looking at the changes made in the way the digital technology was used because of the Pandemic. The definition and development of the Digital Programme. As a result of an increase in staff home working remotely, more emphasis would be placed on self-service. This also extended to users of the Council's services. A breadth of options would be considered including supporting residents who did not have access to digital platforms – enabling through education and an assisted approach were also a strand of the programme.

The welfare of staff who predominantly from home was also a key factor and training at managerial level on how best to support teams was being undertaken to ensure staff remained connected to the organisation. Desktops assessments and physical adaptations, to provide safe and comfortable environments for staff working from home had also been prioritised.

A small number of Staff continued to work from 1 Grove Road and desk provision would be provided for them at the Town Hall. Desks were also available at the Point in Devonshire Park. It was anticipated that those staff who wished to remain in the Eastbourne area if relocated would be accommodated.

RESOLVED to support the recommendations in the report in full.

19 Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: A Plan for Action

Jo Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance presented the report.

Data for Eastbourne District Hospital would become available and any future development there would be looked at for the provision of local energy generation opportunities.

It was recognised that there was a range of contributors to emissions and where the Council was not able to directly affect change it would need to act as an influencer.

It was considered an appropriate point at which to present the Plan to Members. However, it was also recognised that there was further work to be done in terms of targets and detailed action plans.

It was agreed that responses to the following questions would be sought:

- The location of the 5MW installation
- Clarification of the Council's position by comparison to other authorities in terms of recycling rates.
- The ability for the Council to work with the East Sussex County Council in looking at alternative sites for recycling on bank holidays.

Members discussed the pledge by Eastbourne Borough Councillors within the Plan. It was felt that it was not endorsed by all members of the Council and that the wording required further consideration. Members also considered reference to the supporting of Eastbourne Eco-Action Network needed consideration.

RESOLVED to support the recommendations in the report subject to the following amendments being considered by the Cabinet:

(1) The wording of the pledge on page 3 of Appendix 2 to the report – ‘A Plan for Action’ to be amended read:

Introduction to the pledge – ‘As we publish this ‘Plan for Action’ heading towards the end of an eventful 2020, we pledge the following:’ (removing the words ‘the Councillors elected by the residents of Eastbourne’)

Bullet point 2 - ‘We will support the work of Eastbourne Eco-Action Network CIC’ (add the word ‘work’ and remove the words ‘wherever we can’).

Bullet point 3 – ‘We will lead by example, educate ourselves on the impacts of climate change and the changes we can make in our own lifestyles and share this with others.’ (removing the words ‘in the way we live our own lives’ after ‘example’)

20 Forward Plan of Decisions

The Chair, Councillor Freebody, introduced the Forward Plan of Cabinet

Decisions.

Members requested that there be more consistency between the items and decisions being considered by the Cabinet and the reports made available to the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions.

21 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2020-2021

The Chair, Councillor Freebody, introduced the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

RESOLVED to note the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

22 Date of the next meeting

that the date of the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Monday, 8 February 2021 via Teams.

The meeting ended at 19:25

Councillor Tony Freebody (Chair)