

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of meeting held remotely on 8 February 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Tony Freebody (Chair).

Councillors Peter Diplock (Deputy-Chair), Helen Burton, Jane Lamb, Robin Maxted, Amanda Morris, Pat Rodohan and Robert Smart.

Officers in attendance:

Millie McDevitt (Performance and Programmes Lead), Bryn Mabey (Customer, Communications and Engagement Lead), Jane Goodall (Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment), Andrew Clarke (Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Financial Planning)), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer) and Ola Owolabi (Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance)).

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector Di Lewis.

23 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 were submitted and approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

24 Apologies for absence / declaration of substitute members

No apologies were received.

25 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.

26 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

27 Urgent items of business

There were none.

28 Right to address the meeting/order of business

There were no requests.

29 Community Safety Partnership annual report

Oliver Jones, Strategy and Performance Lead – Partnerships, presented the report. Chief Inspector Di Lewis, Sussex Police, was in attendance also to support the presentation. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- A number of the placements in Eastbourne, of those experiencing homelessness, by Brighton and Hove City Council, had resulted in individuals being placed in vulnerable locations unsupported, which had also impacted on vulnerable people already living in those areas. Further Scrutiny of this issue was welcome.
- Anti-social driving around the town centre, the seafront and other areas was generally attributed to young people. Preventative measures did not include regular road checks but where vehicles had been stopped and where Covid 19 breaches had taken place, fixed penalty notices had been issued. The placement of speed cameras was dependent on the severity levels and frequencies of injuries in potential hotspots.
- Noise issues were of concern across the Borough and the County, however there was a significant financial cost to the use of a noise camera. The Roads Policing team was working with neighbourhood teams to look at other measures.
- There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly in the town centre and in the street community. There were a number of contributing factors including malicious communications and general levels of frustration increasing among young people.
- County-lines crime was a key area of concern for Sussex Police and had a significant impact on other areas. It was an area of work that the Police would continue to work on and support.
- The Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) supported the reduction of crime experienced in and around businesses, including retail businesses and residential hotels. The work of the BCRP would play a more significant role as and when Covid 19 restrictions were eased.
- Bike theft had resulted in two individuals being charged and investigations continued as result of further impact from the incidents. Scooter thefts had resulted in the seizure of scooters and the charging of juveniles.
- £420,000 had been awarded by the Government through the Safer Streets Initiative. Bids were led by the Police and Crime Commissioners office and were for specific 'outputs' of crime that applied to areas with the highest rates of acquisitive crime.

- It was noted that there was not a programme of vaccination available for police officers and other police staff working in the community. The Committee thanked Sussex Police for its continued work in difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED to note the report.

30 Corporate performance - Quarter 3 - 2020/21

Millie McDevitt, Organisational Effectiveness and Performance Lead, presented part A of the report. During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The Performance Indicators were changed with the agreement of the lead member of the Cabinet.
- The process for setting the PIs on an annual basis started with agreement by the Cabinet each April, on which PIs and associated targets would form the Performance report.
- The performance indicator for the 'percentage of household waste sent for recycling' relied on third party data being provided, which led to delays in the value being available. The data would be provided when available.
- The detail in the performance indicator measuring the 'percentage of Council Tax collected during the year' would be clarified after the meeting.

Andrew Clarke, Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented part B of the report (Financial Performance). During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The key variation of £539,000 detailed in the table in 1.2 of the report related solely to the loss of subsidy on additional emergency accommodation.
- The emergency Government grant was to provide for the initial cost of food packages and additional support to external bodies affected by Covid-19 and the distribution of the food packages, IT costs and additional costs such as housing benefit. The specific allocation of the grant would not be clear until the Council's out-turn position was known.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To note the Council's progress and performance in Quarter 3.

31 General fund budget 2021/22 and capital programme

Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer, presented the report. During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- Members supported the offer of financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to Eastbourne borough Council and considered that the Cabinet should accept the offer. The timescales for the Leader of the Council accepting the offer were noted.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To note the report; and
- 2) Request that the Cabinet accept the offer of support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

32 Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2021/22, Capital Strategy & Investment Strategy

Ola Owolabi, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, presented the report. During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The Council's cash-flow was fluid throughout the year and was reflected as part of the finance and budget reports, and governance framework required by the Authority. The separate monitoring and forecasting of cash-flow would require the production of a document at particular points throughout the year and additional resources. The Committee agreed that it was not necessary to request this.

RESOLVED to note the report.

33 Housing revenue account budget 2021/22

Andrew Clarke, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The format and presentation of the Housing Revenue Account for Eastbourne Borough Council differed from the one produced for Lewes District Council in that the Eastbourne version included the net value. Future reports would be standardised in the Eastbourne Borough Council format.

RESOLVED to note the report.

34 Response to the public consultation on waste collections

Jane Goodall, Strategy and Partnership Lead (Quality and Environment) and Bryn Mabey, Customer Communications Engagement Lead, presented the report. During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The increased size of recycling bins to a standard 240 litres would increase capacity. Residents would also be able to request additional recycling bins - both these measures would encourage recycling. Bulletins and campaigns on best practice for residents to recycle were also part of the Service.

- Additional waste bin capacity would be provided where a need connected to protected characteristics was recognised. Assisted collections would continue where needed.
- The balanced response to the consultation was noted and that a number of respondents had asked for the weekly collection service to be retained and that equally, other respondents were in favour of a change to bi-weekly collection. The key element of communications once a decision had been made and the service implemented, would be to inform residents of the frequency of collections and the relevant dates.
- Members felt that the communications around the changes to the service should be put in an accessible format for access by all residents. It was confirmed that the Learning Disability and the Autism Partnership Boards across East Sussex and the Eastbourne networks would be used to share the information.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To note the report attached at Appendix 1 of the Scrutiny report; and
- 2) To note the Equality and Fairness Analysis at Appendix 2 of the Scrutiny report.

And that the following recommendation be considered by the Cabinet:

- 3) That the Council's communications, including changes to the Waste Service, be made publicly accessible and be provided in an 'easy read' format.

35 Forward Plan of Decisions

The Chair, Councillor Freebody, introduced the Forward Plan of Decisions.

There was no discussion on the item.

RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan of Decisions.

36 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Chair, Councillor Freebody, introduced the item.

- Members requested that an additional Scrutiny meeting be held in public to discuss the placing by Brighton and Hove City Council, of those experiencing homelessness, in Eastbourne hotels/accommodation.
- A request was also made for a task group to be appointed to look at how East Sussex County Council interacts with Eastbourne Borough in delivery of a transport strategy that works for Eastbourne Borough.

RESOLVED to note the Committee's work programme subject to the inclusion of the items above.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

Councillor Tony Freebody (Chair)