

MINUTES
of the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 8 July 2019 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Galley (Chair)

Councillors L. Ashley, N.A. Dudley, C.L. Finnecey, I.S. Grundy, R.J. Hyland, D.G. Jones, J.S. Lardge,
L.A. Mascot M. Sismey, M.S. Steel, M.D. Watson, R.T. Whitehead and S. Young

1. **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Tron. Councillor L.A. Mascot was appointed as her substitute.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In relation to minute number 9, a member asked a question regarding new criteria for monitoring genuinely affordable housing. It was confirmed by officers that the Committee did have a role in overseeing this and it could be via an individual report or regular monitoring.

3. **Public Question Time**

No questions were asked or statements made.

4. **Decisions Called-In**

The Committee noted that no decisions taken by the Cabinet had been called-in.

5. **Declaration of Interests**

All members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

6. **Health & Safety Annual Report 2018/19**

A report was presented on the performance in 2018/19 of the Corporate Health and Safety function. The report covered training; health and safety auditing; cautionary contacts; accidents relating to employees and members of the public; and provided indicators by which the performance of the function could be measured.

The Committee was informed that the safety management systems continued to be effective. It was noted that the accident levels had remained very low for an organisation delivering a diverse range of services daily to over 170,000 residents and visitors to Chelmsford.

In response to questions from members the Committee was informed that;

- Defibrillators were available at the Council's major locations and a map of units across the city was available online. It was noted that the map could be updated, and this would be looked into by officers. It was also confirmed that the units were designed to be used without any prior training.
- There was nothing specific which had led to the significant drop in public places incidents in 2016 and the slight rise in recent years. It was noted that this was the area with the most expected incidents and the general number was still low for the amount of operations carried out.
- The Heart and Sole walks had led to the increased number of public incidents. It was noted that there had been a large increase in the number of walks though and that the associated health benefits outweighed the incidents.
- Regular assessments and monitoring for legionella took place at Council sites and this was audited externally.
- Staff training was linked to specific job roles and certain courses were therefore mandatory.
- The Council operated their own leisure centres and waste collection, not all Councils did this and therefore, it was difficult to benchmark against a Council with the same services and similar size. Officers agreed to investigate whether similar authorities existed with a view to providing some benchmarking figures with the next annual report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(7.07pm to 7.35pm)

7. **Decisions taken under delegation to the Chief Executive**

The Committee received information on one decision taken under delegation to the Chief Executive for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 May 2019. The decision related to a property acquisition.

In response to a question, the Committee was informed that the acquisition had resulted in a significant return and had been a beneficial purchase. It was also noted that the decision had been made in agreement with the Leader of the opposition at the time.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(7.36 pm to 7.40 pm)

8. **Annual Report on the Scrutiny Function 2018/19**

In accordance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance adopted by the Council on 23 April 2008 a report on the activity of the scrutiny function of the Council for 2018/19 had been prepared. The Code required that the Committee produce an annual report on its work for consideration by the Council and subsequent publication on the Council's website.

The Committee agreed that in future years they would prefer the report to focus directly on what the Committee has achieved and its effectiveness. It was noted that officers would look to re design the annual report for future years.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report on the Scrutiny Function for 2018/19 be approved for subsequent publication

(7.41 pm to 7.51 pm)

9. **Future Work Programme**

The Committee received a report inviting them to comment on the future work programme and to agree the programme for the remainder of 2019/20. The Committee discussed with officers the types of reports received in the past and examples were highlighted.

During the discussion of possible items, the Committee was informed that;

- Further information on previous task and finish groups would be provided to them.
- Inform and Debate sessions were suggested by the Committee in the past and officers then provided a presentation on the topic.
- In the future the Committee could scrutinise policies that had originated from the Chelmsford Policy Board once they had been approved by Cabinet/Council.

The Committee agreed that the following items as suggested by officers, be kept on the work programme:

- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Annual report on Corporate Health & Safety
- Annual report on the Activity of the Scrutiny function
- Annual presentation by Essex Police
- Annual presentation by Safer Chelmsford Partnership
- Annual report on Housing Delivery
- Report on decisions taken under delegation to the Chief Executive.
- Reports from representatives on outside bodies
- Annual Cabinet Portfolio Updates

The Committee also agreed to have a future regular report updating them on the work of the Chelmsford Policy Board. It was noted that this would start later in the work programme due to the Board only recently being formed.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of task and finish groups and decided to look at these and other possible areas at their next meeting. The Committee did however agree to continue with the Task and Finish Group on Community Safety Communication. It was noted that there would need to be new members appointed to the group. The Committee agreed that Cllrs Dobson, Finnecy, Hyland, Mascot and Young be appointed to the group. The Committee was informed that as the group would in effect be restarting, it was unlikely that a final report would be ready for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that;

1. officers produce a work programme based on the Committee's views in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and that this be presented at the next meeting.
2. Councillors Dobson, Finnecy, Hyland, Mascot and Young be appointed to the Community Safety Communication Task and Finish Group.

(7.52 pm to 8.30 pm)

10. **Future Performance Monitoring**

The Committee received a report inviting them to comment on how they wish to monitor performance in the future. The Committee was informed that the current indicators had evolved from the Audit Commissions' best value indicators and that the actual targets had been set by Cabinet and Council. The Committee agreed that the indicators needed to be refreshed and there were other areas where their focus should be. Therefore, the Committee agreed to ask officers to bring some proposed indicators to the next meeting. It was noted that refreshed indicators would allow the Committee to focus on the areas important to them.

RESOLVED that officers provide suggestions for new indicators to be agreed at the next meeting.

(8.31 pm to 8.52 pm)

11. **Urgent Business**

The Committee agreed to move the next meeting from Monday 23rd September to Monday 30th September 2019.

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Committee take place on Monday 30th September 2019.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Chairman