

MINUTES

of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 21 September 2020 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Galley (Chair)
Councillors S. Young (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M.W. Bracken, I.D. Fuller, I.S. Grundy, R.J. Hyland, G.B.R. Knight, J.C.S. Lager, J.S. Lardge, C. Shaw, M. Sismey, M.S. Steel, T.N. Willis and R.T. Whitehead

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashley and Watson. Councillor Knight was appointed as the substitute for Councillor Watson.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

4. Public Question Time

No questions were asked or statements made.

5. Decisions Called-In

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

6. Performance Review – Recycling and Waste Collection

The Committee received a report on the performance of the City Council's Recycling and Waste Collection services. The report contained a comprehensive overview of the service provided to residents. The report detailed the Council's legal duties, the context in which they're provided, the waste economy between different Council's, the 2009 improvement plan and what the current collection systems were. Other aspects were highlighted to the Committee, including the key separate kerbside collections in Chelmsford which were in accordance with national policy and discussions in the waste sector regarding using Co2 equivalent savings as an alternative measure.

The Committee also heard that the report concluded with examinations of cost per household, which had fallen slightly. It was also noted that the service provided in Chelmsford was very comprehensive and there was not much else that could be collected. The Committee were also informed that the recycling rate had improved significantly since the current strategy was adopted and had been consistently better than the national rates. The Committee also heard however that there was still further scope for reduction in the level of non recyclable waste, which was still above the Essex average. This was however an issue reliant on changes in attitude and resident behaviour rather than system or service level changes.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee it was noted that;

- The free garden waste collection service provided was not provided by all Council's but was of importance to Chelmsford and was appreciated by residents.
- The fortnightly collection of residual waste had continued to lead to higher recycling rates since its introduction.
- There had been a recent increase in cardboard and plastic levels, potentially due to an increase in online ordering and food shopping due to Covid-19.
- The main issue facing Chelmsford and recycling generally was a continued increase in the use of plastic. This was an area that needed to be reduced but was reliant on businesses and manufactures and changes in consumer behaviour rather than the Council itself. The Council had however started to issue fewer plastic sacks in an effort to reduce the amount of plastics generated from households.
- Options such as smaller black bins or enforcement were used elsewhere to reduce residual waste and improve recycling but this was not used in Chelmsford. It was noted that it would not be easy to target certain areas as problems were often caused by individual households within many areas rather than whole neighbourhoods.
- Cardboard was easy to recycle and sell in comparison to other materials such as plastic. Plastic had been and would continue to be costly and difficult to recycle to a high standard.

The Committee thanked officers for the report and also asked that their thanks be passed on to staff in the team for their recent hard work in ensuring that services were not disrupted during Covid-19.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(7pm to 7.53pm)

7. Annual Report on Corporate Health and Safety

The Committee received a report on the performance in 2019/20 of the Corporate Health and Safety Function. The report covered various areas including, training, accidents relating to employees and members of the public; and provided indicators by which the performance could be measured.

The Committee heard that due to Covid-19, training had moved online and this had been well received by users. It was also noted that Human Resources applied a training matrix to

each role and this allowed them to work out what and when training was required. In response to previous questions raised, the Committee heard that it was not accurate or possible to benchmark against other authorities or businesses. This was due to accident rates being measured per 100,000 employees which led to inaccurate and misleading figures on smaller levels.

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 daily services to over 170,00 residents and visitors to Chelmsford.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(7.54pm to 8.04pm)

8. Quarterly Review of the work of the Chelmsford Policy Board

The Committee received a report detailing the minutes from the last two meetings of the Chelmsford Policy Board. The Committee noted the minutes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(8.04pm to 8.05pm)

9. Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on its work programme which had been updated following the Committee's last meeting on 8 June 2020. The Committee was reminded that some reports due for this meeting had been postponed due to Covid-19 and future dates would be agreed. Members raised concerns that the Climate Change report or a briefing note had not been provided detailing the baseline from when the Cabinet agreed the climate emergency. It was noted by officers that this work had been on hold due to Covid-19 but some information that was available would be reported at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(8.05pm to 8.20pm)

10. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business brought before the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chair