

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 October 2020

Present: Councillor M Parker (Chair)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D Allen-Williamson, K Crout, P Jeffree, R Martins,
B Mauthoor, G Saffery and M Turmaine

Officers: Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Group Head of Transformation
Head of Programme Management Office
Senior Democratic Services Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introducing the councillors and officers present.

37 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

No apologies had been received.

38 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

The Chair apologised to scrutiny members for her inappropriate language at the end of the previous meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 September.

39 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 were agreed. It was noted that the minutes would be signed once officers and members were able to return to the town hall.

40 **Call-in**

No executive decisions had been called in.

41 **Tracking progress on the Council Plan - 2020-24, Delivery Plan - 2020-22 and Organisational Development Strategy - 2020-24**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the report of the Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications. The report set out how the committee would scrutinise progress on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020-24, Delivery Plan 2020-22 and Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24. It followed the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 July 2020 which had outlined the strategy to lead the renewal of the town and council following the impact of Covid 19.

The Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications briefly introduced the report, commenting that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have the opportunity to review progress on all three reports in detail at its next meeting on 26 November.

Following a question from the Chair regarding the effect of a second Covid-19 wave on delivery, the Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications advised that the November report would profile where milestones had, or were likely to be, impacted. Much had been achieved in the first four months, but the authority was conscious of the potential risks to delivery.

RESOLVED –

that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and agrees:

1. The proposals for receiving progress reports on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020-2024 and associated Delivery Plan 2020-22, starting from November 2020.
2. The proposals for receiving progress reports on the delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-2024 and associated Delivery Plan from November 2020.
3. The ambition to integrate the Council Plan 2020-2024 and Delivery Plan 2020-22 in the Council's new Business Intelligence platform. Once this is established a similar approach will be taken to the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and Delivery Plan.
4. A communications plan will be linked to the progress reporting on the Council Plan to ensure the Council communicates its progress to our community.
5. Staff will be engaged throughout the delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy and regular opportunities to feedback will be an integral part of delivery.

Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group final report

The Chair of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group, Councillor Glen Saffery, was invited to introduce the task group's final report and recommendations.

Councillor Saffery explained that the task group had been set up to review how well the community and voluntary sector had been supported during the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to establish whether there were areas for improvement. Work had focussed on two areas: volunteering and the future of the Community Fund. Councillor Saffery thanked the task group members, witnesses and officers for their constructive engagement.

Councillor Dhindsa commented that, although he had been a member of the task group, he did not agree with the report. He remained concerned about the lack of funds allocated to Watford's BAME communities from the Community Fund and the monitoring undertaken by W3RT. Councillor Dhindsa considered that W3RT needed to undertake more outreach work with BAME groups to raise awareness about the support and assistance available to them. He also suggested that the proposed dedicated fundraiser should be a council, rather than W3RT, employee.

Councillor Saffery regretted Councillor Dhindsa's comments. He disputed the suggestion that members of Watford's BAME communities had not received proportionate funding from the Community Fund. There had been a considerable response to the task group's survey of those who had applied to the Community Fund, and other local voluntary groups, but Councillor Dhindsa's concerns had not been echoed.

Other committee members welcomed the task group's work, which demonstrated the value of scrutiny in its capacity to take an even-handed and arm's length view in order to evaluate and make recommendations for improvement. It was also commented that the Community Fund had been the subject of significant publicity during the pandemic, not least on social media.

In response to comments from scrutiny members, the Chair agreed in accordance with Standing Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 4.2, that it be recorded in the minutes how members cast their votes.

Those members voting for the officer's recommendation

Councillors Parker, Allen-Williamson, Crout, Jeffree, Martins and Saffery

Those members voting against the officer's recommendation

Councillors Dhindsa, Mauthoor and Turmaine

The officer's recommendation was declared to be AGREED.

RESOLVED –

that the final report and recommendations of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group be agreed and forwarded to Cabinet.

Action: Senior Democratic Services Officer

43 Executive Decision Progress Report

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2020-21 and consider whether any further information was required.

RESOLVED –

that the current 2021/21 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

44 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

As the council's appointed representative to Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Parker reported that she had attended a meeting on 30 September. She agreed to send members the presentation from the committee meeting.

Councillor Parker also advised that she had pressed County Councillor Quilty on the Health Services for the Deaf task group's recommendation that West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust should add 'welcome' in a written representation of BSL to the signage outside the main entrance to Watford General Hospital.

The next meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee would take place on 18 December 2020.

45 Work Programme

The scrutiny committee received the 2020/21 work programme.

It was requested that a representative from Everyone Active attend the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the Leisure Centre Management contract was being discussed.

RESOLVED –

that the 2020/21 work programme be noted.

Action: Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 26 November.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.50 pm