

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 7 JULY 2020
Held at 7.00 pm via Zoom

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chairman), B Bansal, A Brennan, N Clarke,
J Walker and J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
P Linfield	Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
L Webb	Democratic Services Officer
S Whittaker	Financial Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors F Purdue-Horan

1 Declarations of Interest

There was no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting 25 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

In response to enquiries made in the previous meeting, the Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services reported that the average sickness absence for Rushcliffe Borough Council employees was 8.9 days against a target of 8 days at the end of 2019/20. She informed the Group that the increase in days was due to a small number of cases of long-term sickness rather than multiple instances of short-term sickness. The Service Manager stated that the Council's absence management policy was robust and was reviewed regularly in order to provide support to employees who were returning to work. The Group were also pleased to hear that other local authorities averaged at 9.7 days which was higher than Rushcliffe Borough Council's average.

3 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Health and Safety Advisor presented the report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods which provided a summary of the Council's occupational health and safety performance during the period of 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The report summarised the Council's health and safety policies, and procedures, as well as activities which had taken place over the last year. It also set out training programmes delivered, provided numerical and statistical data and the proposed health and safety objectives for the year.

The Health and Safety Advisor delivered a presentation to the Group which covered:

- Progress to achieving goals
- Policy Reviews
- Training
- Number of accident forms completed
- Accident forms by type
- Number of days absent due to accidents
- Accidents to members of the public
- New objectives for 2020/21.

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Advisor for summarising the report and delivering the presentation to the Group.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) The report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods be noted
- b) The significant progress made against the health and safety goals and objectives be noted
- c) The health and safety objectives for 2020/21 as set out in the report be endorsed.

4 Implementation of Change

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services informed the Group that there were no major changes to scrutiny apart from that the work of the scrutiny groups had resumed and that postponed meetings had been rescheduled following the outbreak of Covid19.

5 Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes

Corporate Overview Group

It was agreed that the meeting arranged for the Corporate Overview Group on 4 August would be cancelled and that the item 'customer feedback annual report' would instead be discussed at the next scheduled meeting on 22 September 2020.

It was also agreed that the consideration of the future of scrutiny would be discussed at the Corporate Overview Group meetings in September and December 2020. The Group would then make recommendations which would be presented to Cabinet and Council for approval in January and March 2021.

Governance Scrutiny Group

It was agreed that the next meeting would review the impact of Covid19 on risks and that the Risk Management Strategy for 2020 – 2023 would be brought to the following meeting.

Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

The Chairman of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group stated that the item 'customer service and digital transformation' which was due to be discussed at the Group's next meeting in July 2020 would be postponed to a later date as more detailed information was required. It was also agreed that business support and the economic recovery of Rushcliffe due to the impact of Covid19 would be discussed at the Group's meeting in July.

Communities Scrutiny Group

It was noted that the Communities Scrutiny Group's work programme would include a review of the Council's use of fireworks at events in August 2020 following on from the motion considered at Council in March 2020. The Group raised concerns that those of black and minority ethnic backgrounds had been disproportionately affected by the Covid19 pandemic and therefore, the Council's equality scheme would be scrutinised by the Group in August 2020.

It was suggested that provision of cycle paths within the Borough could be a topic for scrutiny. However, it was decided that more facts were required before it could be approved as a topic for discussion. It was agreed that a verbal update be delivered at Corporate Overview Group's next meeting in order for it to be decided if the topic would be discussed in greater detail in 2021.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the work programmes as outlined in the report be approved.
- b) The Corporate Overview Group be provided with a verbal update of the Borough's provision of cycle paths at their next meeting.

Corporate Overview Group

22 September 2020

- Implementation of Change – Scrutiny
- Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- Financial and Performance Management
- Consideration of Future of Scrutiny

15 December 2020

- Implementation of Change – Scrutiny
- Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- Financial and Performance Management
- Diversity Annual Report

23 March 2021

- Implementation of Change – Scrutiny
- Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- Financial and Performance Management

Corporate Governance Group

30 July 2020

- Fraud Annual Report 2019/20
- Internal Audit Progress Report Q4 2019/20
- Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20
- Risk Management Strategy 2020-2023 (including the impact of Covid-19)
- Annual Capital and Investment Strategy Report 2019/20
- Annual Governance Statement 2019/20
- Constitution Updates

29 September 2020

- Internal Audit Progress Report – 5 month update 2020/21
- Risk Management Strategy 2020 – 2023

24 November 2020

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Annual Audit Letter
- Treasury and Asset Investments – 6 monthly update
- Statement of Accounts 2019/20

4 February 2021

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Internal Audit Strategy
- External Audit Annual Plan
- Treasury and Asset Investments Strategy– update
- Risk Management

18 May 2021

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Internal Audit annual Report
- Annual Governance Statement

Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

15 July 2020

- Management of open spaces in new developments – part one
- Business support and economic recovery

25 August 2020

- Customer Services and Digital Transformation
- Planning enforcement policy – part one

14 October 2020

- Management of open spaces in new developments – part two
- Planning Enforcement Policy – part two

20 January 2021

- Town Centres Update

21 April 2021

- xx

Communities Scrutiny Group

23 July 2020

- Dog Fouling, Littering and Fly tipping – part one
- Resources and Waste Strategy Presentation

29 August 2020

- Fireworks
- Rushcliffe Equality Scheme

7 October 2020

- Flooding and Drainage
- Rushcliffe Nature Strategy

28 January 2021

- Dog Fouling, Littering and Fly tipping – part two
- The Future of Edwalton Golf Course

29 April 2021

- Carbon Management Plan Update

6 Finance and Performance Management Q4

The Financial Services Manager presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services which outlined the quarter four position in terms of financial and performance monitoring for 2019/20. It was noted that the draft Statement of Accounts had been prepared and was approved by the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services by 9 June 2020.

The Financial Services Manager explained that due to additional work pressures as a result of Covid19, the approval of the draft accounts was only nine days later than planned and was within the statutory deadlines which have been extended, to 30 August 2020, as a result of the Covid19 pandemic with approval of the audited statements now 30 November 2020.

It was noted that the net revenue position shows a transfer to reserves of £1.348m a net increase of £1.151m and equivalent to 10% of the net budget. It was explained that the majority of the transfer was the distribution of the Nottinghamshire Pool Surplus (of £0.409m which is partially offset by the growth payment to the pool) and the realised increase in renewable energy business rates from 2018/19 (0.381m). The remaining transfer (£0.619m) was from revenue efficiencies reported throughout the year mainly due to additional planning income, increased investment income, car park receipts and rental income from investment properties.

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services asked the Group to comment on the monitored tasks which were outlined in the Corporate Strategy and the performance measures within the Corporate Scorecard. The Group were asked to bear in mind that this report focuses on performance information up to the end of March 2020 and that data relating to quarter one of the current year will be reported at the next meeting of the Group.

It was noted that performance of the tasks and measures within the strategic scorecard had been positive, with five tasks completing within the first twelve months including the relocation of the Rushcliffe Customer Services Centre and the establishment of a carbon neutral target. It was explained that of the 31 performance indicators, five have not met their target mainly due the result of the Covid19 pandemic and that this dip in performance will continue into at least the first quarter of the new year.

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services explained that indicators that had not met their targets included the percentage of planning enforcement inspections carried out in target time due to one of the Enforcement Officers being on long-term absence due to a health issue and being unable to carry out inspections due to the Covid19 pandemic. Another performance indicator which had not met its target was the number of pavilion, community hall and playing field users due to a period of bad weather and the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) The report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

- be noted
- b) The 2019/20 revenue position and the efficiencies identified in the report be noted
- c) The re-profiled position on capital and capital carry forwards be noted.
- d) The cricket club loan update be noted
- e) The finance and performance exceptions be noted.

7 The effect of Covid-19 on current performance levels

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services which detailed the very early impacts of Covid19 on Council business. It was noted that out of 57 performance indicators, 36 were impacted by the outbreak of Covid19. The Service Manager explained that despite the negative impact on performance, staff were able to be resilient and some were redeployed to help other service areas where work levels had increased such as refuse collections and distributing grants to businesses.

The Group thanked Rushcliffe Borough Council staff for working efficiently during the Covid19 pandemic. The Group were pleased that refuse collections remained at full capacity. However, the Group did raise concerns that only £50k in discretionary grants had been allocated to businesses even though the Borough was awarded £927,000. It was explained that the money not allocated would be transferred back to central government and the Group agreed to pass on details of grants available to residents.

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services updated the Group on the possibility of the Council delivering hybrid meetings. It was noted that the ICT Manager was working on a solution for the Council to install the relevant technology for hybrid meetings to be held successfully by September 2020 if the current regulations prohibiting hybrid meetings are lifted before then.

It was RESOLVED that the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm.

CHAIRMAN