

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **10 January 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S A Wilson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr R P Constable
Cllr A H Eves
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon
Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr R Milne

Cllr G W Myers
Cllr J E Newport
Cllr L J Newport
Cllr D W Sharp

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs D L Belton, Mrs C E Roe, D J Sperring and S E Wootton.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J N Gooding and Mrs J R Gooding.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr M J Steptoe	- for Cllr J N Gooding
Cllr I A Foster	- for Cllr Mrs J R Gooding

OFFICERS PRESENT

E Yule	- Strategic Director
M Hotten	- Director of Place
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr M J Steptoe declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Member of Essex County Council and Barling Magna Parish Council.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Members considered the report of the Director of Environment setting out an updated version of the draft Sustainability Strategy.

A Member noted that the report did not reference recently agreed actions by a Motion on Notice relating to Green Hydrogen that was presented to Full Council on 13 December 2022 and requested that it be incorporated into future actions

with regard to the Strategy. Officers confirmed that actions deriving from the Green Hydrogen Motion on Notice would be included in discussions relating to the Strategy.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that budget resources would permit officers to consider whether the Sustainability Strategy Officer post would be a shared post across Rochford District Council (RDC) and Brentwood Borough Council (BBC). It was also noted that RDC had targets that differentiated from BBC that could have an impact on the effectiveness of a shared post should it be considered.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member question as to whether electric vehicle charging points for those who do not have off street parking would be explored going forward, that private and public charging points would be explored in partnership with Essex County Council Highways.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate advised that national planning policy was not currently aligned with what the Strategy was proposing, i.e., maximising opportunities across the District to be renewable. It was also noted that most local authorities were facing similar issues in terms of planning policy lagging behind the transforming issues across the country.

In response to a Member question relating to the governance of the proposed Sub-Committee, officers advised that the Sub-Committee would make recommendations to the Executive, which would make any necessary decisions.

In response to Member questions, the following points were noted:-

- The Sub-Committee would be cross-Party and would be constituted on a pro rata basis; with the Chairman determined by the Sub-Committee.
- All political parties within RDC wanted a Committee that addressed climate issues across the District;
- The composition of the Sub-Committee would be decided upon by the Executive; however, recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be taken into consideration.

Members asked for a larger Committee than one composed of 7 Members to provide adequate resilience on matters that significantly affect the whole District.

Members noted that in order for the Committee to have representation from all political groups the Committee membership should be 11.

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon, to amend recommendation 3 at paragraph 9.1 on page 6.6 of the report: "that a Climate & Sustainability Committee of 11 Members on a pro-rata basis be established."

This was carried on a show of hands.

(12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 1 Member abstained.)

A Member queried the Key Performance Indicators outlined on pages 6.26 to 6.31 of the report and questioned how risks under the Climate (Carbon) Impact column had been assessed. Officers clarified that these were not risks but rather the impact that the outlined aims would have. A stakeholder workshop was accommodated in order to harmonise policies and gauge potential benefits outlined in the Action Plan within Appendix 1.

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson that the word Sub-Committee be replaced with Committee in paragraphs 4.4 and 7.1 on page 6.5 of the report, and this was carried on a show of hands.

(10 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 1 abstained)

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon, to amend the wording at paragraph 9.1 on page 6.6 of the report to replace Council with the Executive and was carried on a show of hands.

(10 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 1 abstained)

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, to add an additional recommendation that the Climate & Sustainability Committee meets on a quarterly basis and this was carried on a show of hands.

(10 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstained)

A Member queried the Committee's terms of reference at paragraph 4.4 on page 6.5 of the report and requested clarification on the second point in relation to emerging opportunities and whether this would impact on any work carried out by RDC. Officers advised that the Council was in liaison with other organisations and organising further workshops. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate added that there would be a significant number of opportunities emerging out of the Strategy and the Council was already in talks with organisations namely Net0; Essex County Council; and Climate Action.

Cllr M J Steptoe moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S A Wilson, to amend the second bullet point of the terms of reference set out at paragraph 4.1 on page 6.5 of the report: "to horizon scan emerging opportunities with or without other organisations" and this was carried on a show of hands.

(12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstained)

Recommended to the Executive

- (1) That the Sustainability Strategy, as appended, be approved and adopted.
- (2) That the Climate & Sustainability Officer post be made permanent.

This was unanimously agreed.

- (3) That a Climate & Sustainability Committee of 11 Members be established on a pro rata basis.

(12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstained)

- (4) That the Climate & Sustainability Committee meets on a quarterly basis.
(SD/DP)

(12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstained)

4 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee noted the content of the Key Decisions Document.

Members noted that reports on the Mill Arts & Events Centre and the Community Investment Plan reports would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee next month.

5 WORK PLAN

The Committee discussed and noted the work plan. An additional meeting date of 23 February 2023 was also noted.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm.

Chairman

Date

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