

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 April 2022

Present

Councillor Lloyd (Chairman)

Councillors Francis (Vice-Chairman), Crellin, Hughes, Sceal and Stone

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor(s):

33 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Briggs, Kennett and Weeks.

34 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda.

35 Climate Environment Action Plan

The Committee was given an opportunity to review the recommendations set in the Cabinet Report "Climate Change And Environment Plan Initial Action Plan 2022-2023" prior to its submission to Cabinet.

The Committee examined, via a question and answer session with the relevant Cabinet Lead and officers, the following aspects of the draft plan:

- The aims, ambitions, and objectives of the plan
- The timing of the implementation of the plan
- The design and complexity of the plan as submitted
- Organisations/bodies that had been consulted when developing the plan as submitted
- Details on how it was proposed to change the culture of the organisation with carbon literacy awareness at all levels
- How the plan would relate to the to the Council's Local Plan ("Local Plan")
- The feasibility of setting climate impact standards within the Local Plan
- The feasibility of engaging community groups and national projects to help the Council achieve it targets

(Details of the questions and answers are set out in an appendix to these minutes)

During the question and answer question, the Cabinet Lead and officers agreed to:

- (i) simplify the format of the plan; and
- (ii) extrapolate Hb1i and HB2i into separate headings

The Committee acknowledged the plan is a living document and supported in principle the aims of the plan. It was particularly pleased to see that it was proposed to incorporate policies within Havant Borough Council's revised Local Plan to ensure energy hierarchies and energy efficiencies would be delivered for development in new housing in the Borough. However, the Committee considered that:

- (a) the plan, in the format submitted to the Committee, was too complex to enable the Council to track and monitor achievements;
- (b) the plan should be revised to identify 4 key areas to make it more manageable; and
- (c) the report did not fully recognise the opportunities available to the Council by working with local community groups.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended that, where possible, the action plan be amended to include more tangible targets for individual targets with a simplified numbering system of these targets.

36 Report of the Overview And Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel on Paperless Meetings

The Committee considered the recommendations of the task and finish panel, which scrutinised how best to proceed towards sending agenda papers and supplementary papers to members by soft copy only.

The Committee examined, via a question-and-answer session with the relevant Cabinet Lead and officers, the aspects of the Panel's report set out below:

- a the costs of providing a laptop to all members of the Council and the methods of financing this provision;
- b the security reasons supporting the provision of a laptop, supported by the Council, to all members of the Council;
- c the use of all or part of the Members' modernisation allowance, to help finance the recommendation in 2.1.1 and point 3.2.1 of the report; and

- d The savings that would be realised if the recommendations set out in the submitted report was adopted.

It was acknowledged that, in the absence of the author of the report, the officers and Cabinet Lead could not comment on whether the members of the Council were asked to identify the equipment they wished to be supplied with.

The Committee acknowledged that the Panel's recommendation (recommendation 1 or another version of 1, meaning a laptop owned by HBC would be lent to the Member) would improve security, but it considered that the insignificant savings that which would be realised by this recommendation could not justify the provision of a laptop to all Councillors.

Instead, the Committee supported an option whereby members were given the choice of having a standard laptop, provided and supported by the Council, in lieu of all or part of their modernisation allowance, to help pay for the equipment, software and support.

However, the Committee accepted that this preferred option would need to be fully costed and compared with the costs of the current system before a final decision could be made. The Committee also considered that the default position for receipt of committee papers be that Councillors do not receive paper copies of agendas unless they specifically request a paper copy.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the option of offering all councillors the opportunity of giving up all or part of their modernisation allowance to finance a new laptop provided and supported by the Council be explored
- 2 the current cost of supporting councillors using their own IT equipment be explored and
- 3 the default position be that councillors will not receive paper copies of agendas unless they specifically request them.

37 Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel on the Council's Business Grants Support During the Covid 19 Lockdown

The Committee considered the recommendations of the task and finish panel, which reviewed the Council's response to C19 regarding the disbursement of government funds to businesses as grants.

In response to a question raised by a member of the Committee, the Head of Customer Services reassured the Committee that the processes were in place for payments in the event of the Council facing a similar situation in the future.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to the way the officers had responded to a such a complex and unique situation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that:

- (a) Overview and Scrutiny notes the uniqueness and complexity of the situation the council with which the Council was faced;
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny notes that without the massive, personal effort made by the key officers in charge of working with Capita to disburse the funds to businesses, the Council would not have helped the Borough's businesses as it did; and
- (c) Overview and Scrutiny wishes to commend those officers who worked tirelessly to physically process those many cases which demanded further scrutiny at the time, under immense pressure, in order that Havant Borough Council incurred no penalty for any fraudulent activity being possible, within this unique process.

38 Annual Scrutiny Report

The Committee considered its annual report for the year 2021/22.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to note the submitted report

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 7.45 pm

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Chairman