

Minutes of the Corporate Review Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2020

Present: Colin Greatorex (Chairman)

Attendance

Charlotte Atkins	Ian Parry
Mike Davies	Jeremy Pert
Helen Fisher	Bernard Peters
John Francis	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Jeremy Oates	Susan Woodward (Opposition Vice Chairman)

Also in attendance: Alan White, Mike Sutherland, Victoria Wilson.

Apologies: Stephen Sweeney

PART ONE

20. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made at the meeting.

21. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. Covid -19 update

The Leader of the Council, supported by the Director of Health and Care gave the following update on the current Covid-19 situation:

- The number of Covid-19 cases was increasing slowly, mirroring the national picture.
- The case rate in Staffordshire was above that nationally and in the West Midlands.
- The NHS, both locally and nationally was experiencing pressure due to increase demand and staff absence due to sickness and self isolation.
- Schools were signalling a degree of stress due to staff shortages and the track and trace process.
- The national lockdown was still in place and should be promoted locally.
- Alert levels may change after lockdown and discussions would take place as to the level Staffordshire would be placed in.
- Staffordshire was one of 60 areas in the rollout of lateral flow testing pilot. This would require trained operators, which there would be no national funding to provide.

- The vaccine situation was looking encouraging.

Work with District/Borough Councils, voluntary groups and large employers was taking place to ensure that there would be sufficient capacity to carry out lateral flow testing.

The NHS would be the lead agency for vaccinations, and they were working on a local delivery plan. It was thought that it would combine large mass vaccination centres and local centres e.g. GP surgery's which could support more vulnerable individuals.

It was felt that the relationships with other tier authorities had work well as had the Central Government facilitating and Local Authorities delivering. This would continue to be promoted. 'I care' volunteers and Organisations such as St Johns Ambulance would continue to provide essential services to local people.

Care homes were being prepared for the programme of vaccination and lateral flow testing. This would probably be introduced through a pilot and then rolled out across the County.

RESOLVED: The Leader and Officers were thanked for their report.

23. Customer Feedback and Complaints Service - Annual Report 2019-20 (Corporate Services)

The Corporate Annual Report of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Services is one of Three reports produced annually. The other two statutory reports concerning Adult and Children's services were considered by the Safe and Strong Select Committee. The Corporate report covered all services including Highways, Library's, Trading Standards etc.

The complaints procedure was briefly outlined. Stage One complaints were down by 30%, Stage two review requests down by five %, and Ombudsman complaints was down by 11% on previous years.

In relation to Stage two complaints, the Committee was informed that it was generally the Highway service that saw more complaints escalated to stage two and it was hoped that this would be addressed with the possible recruitment of a new post that would be able to liaise with customers prior to complaints being made.

A discussion took place on the elderly and what could be done to support those who didn't have access to on line or automated reporting or request for service. It was explained that Adult Services were looking at this area and the introduction of IT Buddies in Libraries should help to support people request services or report problems. Work was also underway to inform Parish, Districts and Borough Councils and the press and voluntary sector of the new buddy scheme so those who need support know how to access it. The Council does have on line systems to make a complaint but we also have direct dial phone numbers for citizens to contact the complaints team.

The Committee discussed the reason why the report was considered at Corporate Review. It was explained that it was considered to be good practise to consider the corporate complaints position and use the information to inform Select Committee work

programmes. Members felt that it was a useful document and suggested that all Members of the Council have sight of the report.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service annual report 2019/20 be noted.
- b) The appointment of the post in Highways to deal with complaints was welcomed.
- c) It was recognised that some complaints were not being captured due to accessibility of online or automated complaints process.
- d) That all Members of the Council should receive a copy of the report for information.

24. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2020/21

The Committee considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance which provided an overview of the Councils progress, performance and financial position in delivering the Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan.

Members queried what was being done to reduce the Adult Safeguarding service waiting lists. It was explained that the increase was largely due to increased demand and the team was prioritizing work. Members requested information on the number of people on the waiting list and the expected waiting times. A question was also asked of the reablement services and what changes to services had been introduced in the way of assistive technology to ensure that people regained independence as soon as possible.

The wide range of support offered to local business was acknowledged. The amount of financial support provided to the County Council to support this was outlined. Members asked for information on any financial support that was being offered by District or Borough Councils.

It was explained that the Family Hubs were administering the £800,000 Defra Emergency food Scheme and that as of 8 October less than £20,000 had been distributed. Members requested an update on the number of families receiving support, the amount spent to date and the strategy to reach those families in the most need.

It was reported that 94% of the backlog in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) was now cleared. With 33% of new EHCP being issued within 20 weeks. The Cabinet Member had requested an action plan to address the continued backlog and this would be shared with the Committee for information.

Information on the £2m investment (on top of the £5m previously allocated) for improvements to road drains, gully emptying, roadside grass cutting etc was requested to go to all Members of the Council.

The report made reference to the Residents Survey which closed in September 2020 and which would inform the Councils recovery and business planning. This information would be reported to Cabinet on 25 November 2020. The Committee asked that the survey findings and the subsequent recommendations come to this Committee for consideration.

The report informed Members that a 5-year action plan to deliver carbon reductions was being developed. Sight of the plan was requested.

The #Doingourbit Community Fund had been oversubscribed and there had been some technical issues with uploading applications. These were being worked through and information would be emailed to Members of the committee as soon as available.

Councillor Woodward had difficulty with the broadband connection and was asked to submit her questions via email for a written response.

RESOLVED:

- a) The report was noted.
- b) The following information was requested:
 - i. The number of people on the Adult Safeguarding service waiting list and their expected waiting times and information on any changes to the reablement services and assistive technology.
 - ii. Request information from District and Borough Councils on the financial support being offered to business.
 - iii. An update on the number of families receiving support through the Defra Emergency food Scheme; the amount spent to date; and the strategy to reach those families in the most need.
 - iv. The action plan to address the EHCP backlog.
 - v. Information on the £2m investment (on top of the £5m allocated) for improvements to road drains, gully emptying, roadside grass cutting etc be circulated to all Members of the Council.
 - vi. The 5-year action plan to deliver carbon reductions be circulated to the committee for information.
 - vii. An update on the #Doingourbit Community Fund.
- c) The results of the Residents Survey and the subsequent recommendations be included in the Committees work programme.

25. Communities Principle - Update and Plan for 2020/21

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture introduced the report which provided an update on the Communities Delivery Plan.

It was suggested that the impact of Covid had hit families with Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) more harshly than most, particularly those out of School/Education settings. Families with SEND children had expressed concern that equipment lent to them for school work could get broken and it was suggested that instead of lending equipment, funds could be provided which would enable families to buy their own so there was less fear of damage or loss. It was reported that there had been a wider piece of work carried out looking at digital inclusion and this could be brought to the Committee for their input.

It was felt that communities were stronger when working together and that there should be more support to identify local need and local solutions based on local knowledge.

The Delivery Plan was currently at a high strategic level but once agreed, detailed plans, with measurable targets would be formulated in order to achieve delivery.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Communities Principle plan was noted.
- b) A report on Digital Inclusion (including those with SEND) be included in the work programme.

26. Work Programme

RESOLVED: That subject to the items requested in previous reports being added to the work Programme, the Work Programme was agreed.

Chairman