

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
18 OCTOBER 2023
5.30PM – 6.16PM**



Present:

Councillors Welch (Vice-Chair), Barnard, C Eberle, Egglestone, Haffegée, McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, C Thompson and Webb

Present Virtually:

Councillor Watts
Victoria Hill, Parent Governor Representative

Also Present:

Councillors Cochrane, Penfold and Hayes
Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration

Also Present Virtually:

Katie Flint, Policy and Performance Lead

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Pickering and M Forster

22. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 31 August 2023 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

Responses to all of the queries and requests for information raised in the meeting had been received or formed part of the agenda.

23. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Christoph Eberle declared a personal interest in Thames Water as the company he worked for meant he carried out projects for Thames Water occasionally.

There were no indications that councillors would be participating while under the party whip.

24. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

25. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

26. **Draft Council Plan 2023-2027**

Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration provided a brief introduction to the Council Plan. It was noted that the Council Plan was essential to the policy framework and outlined the Council priorities for the four years up to 2027. The development of the plan had incorporated significant engagement and feedback to ensure correct structure and wording. It was noted that the content of the plan has been tested to ensure its relevance within the period of the plan but has also remained ambitious, deliverable and was set in the context of the Council's available budget.

Katie Flint, Policy and Performance Lead provided a short presentation on the Draft Council Plan. It was acknowledged that the plan forms the underpinning of the development of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and hence feedback from the commission was welcomed. The following points were shared:

- The plan was set around a structure of three borough priorities and an internally focussed theme.
- It was ambitious and set goals and objectives that required close working with partners. This point recognised that to obtain the best results for residents the whole system would need to work together. The plan provided a framework that would enable the development of these conversations.
- The plan set the strategic goals and key results for the four-year period, 2023-2027. It was noted that each of the directorate service plans would provide more detail on specific activities, development of these would take place once the Council Plan was finalised.
- Feedback gathered from this commission meeting would be provided to the Executive for consideration of inclusion in the final plan.

The following points were made and questions asked:

- It was acknowledged that climate change and the commitment to reach net zero through reducing emissions was covered but a query was raised regarding the lack of content around renewables. In response it was noted that there were a number of options of modifications that could be made. It was suggested that this recommendation could be put forward to suggest an additional metric was added to the green and sustainable environment regarding energy usage and renewable energy on the Council estate.
- On page 15 of the plan, a question was asked about the point 'children have quality education and opportunities to fulfil their potential'. Why was there no mention of the Ofsted rating for schools being seen as good or outstanding? It was suggested that this would provide a broader definition of attainment targets and would provide a key auditable benchmark. In response it was noted that this highlighted a minor error, and the wording would be corrected to include this. A further query was raised regarding whether there could be reference to Bracknell Forests current school improvement plan, which was wider than Ofsted. This would pick up on emotional wellbeing and mental health and would therefore provide improved preparation for future external audit and scrutiny.
- A query was raised that on page 19 there was no metric linked to resilience which was seen as an important aspect of the response to the climate emergency. It was acknowledged that this was looked at by the climate change team. It was however difficult to identify which metrics and measures could be linked to resilience. A proposal was made that this could be looked at in more detail in the service plans. Further comment on this suggested that resilience measures could be related to sewage discharges, it was felt this should be proposed as something that needed to be looked at in more detail.

Further clarification was sought on this point with the issue being raised that if the council has no direct influence over a target than it should not be included in the Council Plan.

Clarification was provided that these points are very detailed and would be picked up in service plans.

- With reference to the point 'Residents can access appropriate care, suitable for a changing population'.
 - Is there going to be an additional metric to look at the issue of how quickly patients are discharged from hospital once they have been told they can go? Further conversations have taken place around this and questions were raised around the sample size and frequency of data. It was suggested to change this to a measure of satisfaction around social care support. This would be measured through the adult social care framework.
 - Clarification was sought around what was covered by the point increasing long term support being delivered at home. It was explained that this would be a specific metric around the percentage of long-term support of residents not in residential or nursing care. This is a performance metric within service plans. Further detail could be provided on this.
 - Reference the point increasing care placements made to good or outstanding providers a question was asked regarding what data would be used and how would this be measured. The metric was based on the percentage of care placements that have been commissioned as part of services provided. A setting was deemed good or outstanding based on CQC ratings. More detail could be provided by the service areas to respond.
- To measure the success of meeting the ambitious targets and ensure residents can see outcomes have been achieved within the plan it was requested that the Council Plan was brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in four years so that they could look comprehensively at the performance. It was agreed that information on outcomes would be seen as part of the CPOR that would be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny commission every quarter. Nothing has been agreed regarding to date for a bigger review of the plan but this could be explored further.
- Reference page 17 and the point about 'increasing the attractiveness (cleanliness) of neighbourhood centres'. It was asked why there weren't plans in place to acknowledge and maintain the ageing infrastructure of neighbourhoods within a new town which would develop understanding of areas that required investment. It was explained that maintenance budgets are in place to manage ageing infrastructure. It was noted that the point in the plan was specifically regarding neighbourhood centres but the point about managing infrastructure was noted as something to be considered and proposed as a recommendation to vote on.
- Reference page 19 and the point 'Increasing delivery of infrastructure through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)' A question was asked whether CIL could be used to invest in updates of drainage systems. In response it was acknowledged that CIL was used as capital investment into new infrastructure. Maintenance budgets would be used to address the points raised in the question and picked up in service plans regarding management and maintenance of the highway network.
- A comment was made in support of sustainable travel plans. It was asked if there could be target in the plan to reduce incidents of 'rowdiness' through better road design and identification of hotspot areas.
- Reference item KR341 on page 27 it was asked if this point could be amended from noting the TVB network to include all existing and emerging networks. It was noted that this could be put forward as a recommendation to vote on.

A debate of the recommendations took place. The following points were raised:

- On page 27 of the plan it was proposed that a new metric was added to increase the amount of renewable energy generated on the councillor estate.
- It was suggested that the council plan would be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at the end of the four years so that they could look comprehensively at the performance and outcomes of the plan.
- On page 17 it was requested that further consideration would be given to maintaining improving infrastructure resilience by developing suitable performance metrics.
- Reference the ambition on page 19 that 'Local transport networks provide choice in travel' it was suggested that the word 'safe' be inserted so that it reads 'safe choice in travel'.
- Reference item KR341 on page 27 it was proposed that this point could be amended to include all existing and emerging networks after TVB network.
- It was suggested that there was a recommendation to ensure that the school Ofsted measurements includes reference to the school improvement standards to meet the broader needs of students.
- It was noted that there should be recognition that within a new town work may be required to the infrastructure that goes beyond routine maintenance. Examples of this included landscaping that was now not as biodiverse as it could be, ageing street furniture or road surfaces. It was suggested that updates to these could be linked to other aspects of design, for example improved road design which could consider the increased need for electric vehicle charging spaces.

The following recommendations to the Executive were proposed and received a unanimous vote:

- On page 27 of the plan, a new metric to be added to increase the amount of renewable energy generated on the councillor estate.
- Retain all schools and early years settings to be good and outstanding in line with the Bracknell Forest standard as set out in the improvement strategy.
- To include climate change resilience within the plan.
- To improve and replace ageing infrastructure that goes beyond routine maintenance.
- That at the end of the four year cycle the plan is brought back to the Commission with a summary report.
- Request an amendment that local transport networks provide 'safe' choice and travel.
- That KR341 be amended to include 'other operators' after TVB.

CHAIR