

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

18 JUNE 2020

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Recommendation

It is recommended that

- (1) The report is noted by the Committee following presentation and verbal agreement at the meeting of 12 March.

Summary

Policy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Panel nominated a Councillor Task and Finish Group to look into issues relating to the Council's Environment and Transport Portfolios ahead of a focused scrutiny session in September 2019. This is report from the Task and Finish Group.

Focus for Scrutiny

To note and comment upon the recommendations in the report (paragraph 19).

Statutory Powers

Section 2 Local Government Act 2000

Strategic Implications

1. This report directly relates to the Corporate Plan in relation to two of its overarching objectives:
 - 1) Green Borough – this report makes recommendations that support the Council's work on an Excellent Environment for all, Tackling Congestion and Green Infrastructure;
 - 2) This report also considers activity supporting Health and Wellbeing, specifically Enabling Healthier Lifestyles.

Introduction

2. The aim of the group was to prepare for scrutiny of Eastleigh Borough Council's Environment and Transport Portfolios by meeting with staff and

Portfolio Holders, identifying areas of interest to the group, and requesting relevant background information.

Process

3. The Environment and Transport Task and Finish Group met in June 2019 to address scrutiny of the Environment Portfolio of the Corporate Action Plan.
4. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel met in July 2019 considered two aspects of the Environment Portfolio: Climate Change and Biodiversity.
5. The Environment and Transport Task and Finish Group met in August 2019 to address scrutiny of the Transport Portfolio of the Corporate Action Plan.
6. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel met in September 2019 and addressed the Transport Portfolio objective and actions. The objective of tackling congestion and pollution was challenged, and a revised objective to address sustainability was suggested.
7. In July 2019 a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency was unanimously declared by Council. Environmental resources were aligned to address this priority and a cross party Working Group was set up to address delivery of a Strategy and Action Plan.
8. The Green Infrastructure, Minimising waste, Maximising Resources, which include plans for renewable energy actions of the Environment Portfolio were not scrutinised by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee. However these are part of the Council's Climate and Environmental Emergency Programme.

Topics Scrutinised and Information Obtained

9. Portfolio scrutiny focussed on Eastleigh Borough Council's Corporate Action Plan for 2019/20, which included aims and actions as follows:

Environment Portfolio

To Develop Green Infrastructure, by

- Developing a Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Assessment by March 2020

To Minimise Waste, by

- Undertaking a Review of Council's Waste Policy and encourage more recycling
- Increasing percentage of waste recycled
- Updating the Waste Policy by June 2019

- Producing Welcome packs for new households by end of December 2019
- Increasing food waste collected, campaign launch Summer 2019

To Create an Excellent Environment for All, by

- Reviewing zero carbon targets 2019/20
- Creating a plan for renewable energy 2019/20

Areas to Address

10. Future policy work should address how the Council, residents and businesses can be encouraged to reduce their carbon footprint, minimise waste, reuse and recycle more. This includes policies for avoiding, reducing and recycling plastics.
11. It also needs to address how the Council can encourage green infrastructure across the Borough. This could include planting more trees, encouraging wildflowers, better facilities for walking, cycling, electric and other non-polluting vehicles, limiting or preventing normal motorised access and parking near schools, avoiding harmful herbicides.
12. Renewable energy in new and existing developments, and for transport, needs to be addressed.

Transport Portfolio

To Tackle congestion and associated pollution, by

- Supporting a traffic study leading to improvements to Bishopstoke Road / Chickenhall Lane Junction – to commence 2019/20 subject to HCC.
- Undertaking a range of actions to support sustainable travel (eg through new developments)
- Optimising waste fleet routes - by July 2019
- Supporting the Botley Bypass, to commence Summer 2019
- Producing an Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, by December 2020
- Cycling and Walking Strategy - by Autumn 2019

Areas to Address

13. The Council's Air Quality Strategy needs to be implemented and challenged further to address pollutants with finer particulates and from sources other than transport.

14. Sustainable transport across the Borough, including in new developments, also needs to be addressed. This includes rail, bus, cycling, walking, electric vehicles.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications to this report which is not seeking a decision.

Risk Assessment

16. No risk assessment has been carried out as the report is not seeking a decision.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report because:
- It has been assessed against the criteria and an Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out as:
 - (a) The report is not seeking a decision;
 - (b) The recommendations all relate to other documents which have all been assessed against these criteria previously

Therefore, it is considered that for this decision the Equality Duty does not need to be addressed and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been carried out.

Climate and Environmental Implications

18. This report focuses on the environment and makes a number of recommendations to further embed the Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – see paragraph 19 below.

Conclusion and Recommendations

19. The Task and Finish group made the following recommendations for consideration by the Policy & Performance Scrutiny Pane at its meeting of 12 March 2020:
- (1) Note the significant activity within the Environment and Transport Portfolios this year, with respect to the Corporate Action Plan and Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Declaration, and thanks Portfolio Holders and officers for their constructive and positive engagement with the Panel;
 - (2) Make a recommendation to Cabinet that the governance arrangements around the Climate Change Action Plan be finalised; (note of progress since the report written – this has now been finalised with a Climate Change Board in place)

- (3) Adopt a regular item in the work plan to scrutinise implementation of, and changes to, the Climate Change Action Plan;
- (4) Make a recommendation to Cabinet for the preparation and adoption of an extended Air Quality Action Plan, to include pollutants not covered by the Council's statutory air quality obligations, in particular PM2.5 pollution; (note of progress since the report written – New Air Quality Plan in place which includes PM2.5 in addition of other air pollutants).
- (5) Make a recommendation to Cabinet to commend the work to date on carbon impact modelling in reports, and request that efforts to improve that modelling are continued in earnest;
- (6) Make a recommendation to Cabinet to ensure that carbon emissions and other environmental impacts can be considered, as far as is possible within the National Planning Policy Framework, in planning decisions, possibly through the adoption of an appropriate Supplementary Planning Document; (note on progress since the report was written – this issue is now picked up in the Climate Change Action Plan)
- (7) Include scrutiny of the Walking and Cycling Strategy, and Public Transport Strategy, in the work plan for 2020/21.

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Appendices Attached: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

* List Background Papers or state None.