

Council

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Report of the Chair

Annual Report of the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To provide full Council with an overview of the work and activities undertaken by the Infrastructure Safety & Growth (IS&G) Scrutiny Committee during the year 2019/20.

Executive Summary

This report covers the following:

- Chair's overview
- Working Groups
- Recommendations made in the year to Cabinet
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Membership and Attendance
- Training & Effectiveness
- Work Plan
- Resource implications

Recommendations

Council is requested to:

- Note the Annual Report of the Committee;
- Note the updated process for production and consideration of this Annual Report;

Chair's Overview

I have been quite happy with the topics the scrutiny committee has examined and wish to thank all members of the IS&G Committee for their input over the last year and all officers and Portfolio Holders that have been invited. Also particular thanks to our scrutiny officer Jo Hutchison for her support over the year. I look forward to working with members again over the next 12 months and challenging and supporting Cabinet through scrutiny where necessary.

The Committee met eight times in the 2019/20 municipal year. The final (expected to be ninth) meeting of the municipal year in March 2020 was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The cancelled March meeting was due to receive an Electric Vehicle Charging update and an annual update on crime figures and community safety in Tamworth. Both items will be brought forward to the next available meeting of the Committee.

In terms of the work of the Committee during 2019/20 municipal year, this has included:

1. Policy Development and /or Review

This is where the Committee has contributed to the Council's policy development processes and / or where the Committee has considered the implementation of policies and feeding back scrutiny views to Cabinet.

The Committee has reviewed, and (in some cases) made Policy Development recommendations in the following areas:

(a) CCTV Service

The Committee received a briefing on the proposals for the Council's CCTV service, including the key findings, options for modernising future service delivery including the financial and commercial impacts and action plan. This was considered by the committee as a confidential item, and followed a briefing which the Committee had received in April 2019. The Committee was largely supportive of the proposal to recommend to Cabinet that a shared service model be adopted and made some recommendations to Cabinet on specific aspects which were taken on board by Cabinet when it later approved the preferred option.

An update on the steps towards implementation of the new CCTV shared service by WMCA from April 2020, was received by the Committee in January 2020 which showed details of how the shared service would be operated from the WMCA control centre and allowed members to seek clarifications in areas such as:

- how the monitoring of the Tamworth cameras would operate in practice,
- how activity could be tracked across geographic borders,
- how local knowledge was being preserved and
- how large scale regional events could be managed without effecting local performance.

(b) Electric Vehicle Charging

This item was identified by the Chair for the Committee's consideration. Following research, the Committee considered and discussed the issues and the position locally in Tamworth and considered areas where the Council could consider developing its policy further in terms of electric vehicle charging. The Committee recommended to Cabinet that the following be undertaken:

1. in the short term, to install a fast charge unit on a council car park in the Borough.
2. an infrastructure plan be developed including the following:
 - Identify suitable sites for electric 'plug-in' vehicle infrastructure.

- Explore funding opportunities both nationally such as Department for Transport / Office of Low Emission Vehicles and locally such as local partnerships and organisations.
 - Work with a range of partners to support the installation of infrastructure.
 - Build confidence in the technology by providing residents and local businesses with information on electric vehicles and recharging infrastructure. Promote home charging grants to residents.
 - Develop an Action Plan for delivery, review this regularly and report on progress internally and externally.
 - Install a fast charge unit on a council car park in the Borough.
3. That relevant officers are tasked with submitting a bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles for capital funding for an initial 4 charging points (Max grant £30,000 -75%)
 4. That subject to the receipt of a grant, £10,000 (25%) be made available from the General reserve to fund the balance of the works.
 5. That, subject to 3 above, those officers tasked with the project meet with the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Committee at a future date to discuss the project.

Cabinet accepted Recommendations 1 and 2 only and added an additional recommendation that Officers are to be tasked to create a project and to keep Scrutiny involved on its progress and then bring the report back to Cabinet for consideration. The Committee expected an update on progress at the 31 March 2020 meeting, which was cancelled. Accordingly this item will be retained on the Committee's Work Plan for consideration during the next municipal year, when appropriate.

(c) Castle Update

The Committee received an update on the Castle review, following an interim update which it had received in January 2019. Whilst activity in certain areas continued, progress was reported in terms of the online ticket booking system. Furthermore, whilst the administration process affecting one of the contractors undertaking the HLF works would be likely to affect the method of delivery, the outcomes were still expected to be achieved. The Committee sought clarification over steps being taken to continue to promote the attractive and whether consideration had been given to involving the Arts & Events team in this activity.

(d) Waste Management

The Committee was updated on the Government's National Resources, Waste Strategy and Consultations and provided with details of the review of the Joint Waste Management Service with Lichfield District Council. The Committee noted that the recycling market could become more challenging and potentially more costly.

The Committee noted the objective of the Government to improve the quality of the recycling market and to bring more standardisation into the recycling market, as well as the differences in the economics of recycling food as opposed to garden waste. The Committee sought clarification on whether there was any potential for there to be waste solutions working

across wider inter-authority arrangements, which could look to the disposal authorities to take a lead role (in our area this was Staffordshire County Council).

The Committee agreed that this policy development area was one which should be retained on its work plan going forwards.

(e) Licensing Policy

Following the Licensing Committee's review of the revised Proposed Licensing Policy 2020-23, and prior to Cabinet and Council's consideration and ultimate approval, the Committee was taken through the consultation process and comments received and was invited to review and comment on the proposals.

The Committee discussed aspects of the proposed policy, in particular the role of the cumulative impact assessment to guide the Council when in receipt of new applications.

The Committee supported the proposed Policy.

2. Monitoring (scrutiny)

This is where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance and progress.

In particular the Terms of Reference for this Committee set out the specific areas for scrutiny which include:

- To provide effective scrutiny of the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and external providers in securing the primary outcome of creating a safe and sustaining thriving local economy and making Tamworth a more aspirational and competitive place to do business.
- Statutory Crime and Disorder obligation; the Committee shall act as the Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and may co-opt additional members subject to the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.
- Highways (full Council decision)
- Education
- Employment/Inward Investment
- Town Centre
- Open Space and Play

At each meeting the Committee receives and considers the Forward Plan to assist in its identification of whether there are any forthcoming key decisions which this Committee determined that it would scrutinise, either pre decision or post decision. Examples of areas which were identified for the Committee's scrutiny as a result of regular Forward Plan consideration were; the Proposed Licensing Policy and the the Future High Street Fund process. However, many of the areas identified for scrutiny were not matters which were identified from the Forward Plan.

Over the year 2019/20, areas scrutinised included:

(a) Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

Under the Council's PSPO process, the Committee is required to consider consultation evidence received as part of any proposal to introduce or renew a PSPO, and if appropriate endorse the order prior to the Portfolio Holder using his delegated powers to approve it. During the year 2019/2020 this Committee considered and endorsed for adoption the renewal of the PSPO for the Access road to Dosthill Hall.

(b) Tamworth Enterprise Centre

The Committee received an update on the progress of this project which had started around 2 years previously with the opening of the Tamworth Enterprise Centre which provided a hub for businesses to start, grow and develop in a supportive environment and to deliver a wider economic impact. The Committee discussed the impact and success of the project and its future development and endorsed the progress made.

(c) Fire Safety developments

The Committee was updated on the Government's detailed set of proposals for consultation on the future of fire safety in high-rise residential buildings. It was reported that the key messages from this consultation were:-

- Clearer responsibilities for those building or managing high-rise buildings
- Giving a stronger voice in the system and better information for residents
- Having greater oversight by regulators
- Tougher enforcement when things go wrong

The Committee noted the work underway to assess the potential impacts if the proposals were implemented and agreed that it would consider a further update as the legislative changes progressed.

(d) Future High Street Fund application

The Committee received two detailed updates during the year on the Future High Street Fund application process, which in both instances were considered without the press and the public being present. The Committee considered the project at both an early stage of development and prior to the outline business case being considered by Full Council. The Committee supported the objectives set out in the report.

3. **Call-in**

This is where a decision of the Executive has been called in to be considered by a scrutiny committee, after a Cabinet decision has been made but ahead of it implementation, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

No decisions have been called in to date.

The process for the production and consideration of this Committee's Annual Report, together with the two other Scrutiny Committees' Annual Reports, has been updated. This change was designed to:

- facilitate the production of an annual report which covered the business of the full municipal year (2019/20); and
- ensure that members of the relevant scrutiny committee had an opportunity to comment (by circulation) on the draft Annual Report, before its receipt by full Council.

Accordingly, each scrutiny committee Annual Report is to be received at a full Council meeting in the following municipal year (2020/21).

Working Groups

None formed this year.

Recommendations made to and Responses received from Cabinet

Recommendations were made to Cabinet on the following Reports and Cabinet's response is highlighted:

| Scrutiny meeting item | Cabinet Response |
|--|--|
| CCTV Recommendations - 24 June 2019 meeting | Recommendations incorporated within the report which was approved by Cabinet |
| Electric Vehicle Charging recommendations – 24 July 2019 meeting | Recommendations 1 and 2 accepted and Officers tasked to create a project and to keep Scrutiny involved on its progress and then bring the report back to Cabinet for consideration. Feedback from Officers expected. |

Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee Terms of Reference are set out in the Constitution and for ease are included at Appendix 1 to this Report.

The Primary Scope, the General Role and the Specific functions detailed in the Constitution have been largely achieved through the Committee's work this year. However, the final meeting of the year was cancelled following full Council's resolutions in the light of the social distancing measures resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic. This meant that the update from Staffordshire Police on Local Crime Figures and on Community Safety, which was scheduled to be received at that meeting, did not take place. Items not considered will be retained on the Committee's Work Plan for the next municipal year.

Members and Members Attendance

The following sets out the membership and attendance of members at the 8 Committee meetings during 2019/20.

Please note that the Councillor R Ford joined the Committee in January 2020 and therefore his attendance is recorded out of 2:

| Member | Number of meetings attended |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Simon Goodall (Chair) | 8 out of 8 |
| Alex Farrell (Vice-Chair) | 8 out of 8 |
| Marie Bailey | 2 out of 8 |
| Robert Bilcliff | 6 out of 8 |
| Paul Brindley | 7 out of 8 |
| Tina Clements | 8 out of 8 |
| Richard Ford | 2 out of 2 |
| Simon People | 7 out of 8 |
| Peter Thurgood | 7 out of 8 |

Training and Effectiveness

The Chair attended a two day Scrutiny training course, aimed at Scrutiny Chairs and vice-Chairs, which was run by the Local Government Association.

This particular course highlighted some particular scrutiny techniques that could be used moving forwards. It was particularly good to meet with other members from other local authorities to understand and share scrutiny development ideas. It was helpful in reinforcing the view in which scrutiny at Tamworth Borough Council is going is in the right direction.

Work Plan - Items identified for next municipal year

The existing Committee Work plan is appended as Appendix 2.

Please note that it is expected that the activities of the Committee may be impacted by the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. This is expected to result from the fact that the committee meetings will be held remotely for at least part of this municipal year, and in order to ensure that there is a tight focus on business critical items at this time.

Resource Implications

None identified.

Report Author

Councillor S Goodall
Chair of the IS&G Scrutiny Committee

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Article 6 of the Constitution – Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference
Appendix 2 – Committee’s Work Plan

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