

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Community,
Customer Services and Service Delivery
held on Wednesday, 3rd February, 2021
from 4.00 - 5.35 pm**

Present: A Boutrup (Chair)
Anthea Lea (Vice-Chair)

L Bennett	J Henwood	D Sweatman
P Chapman	T Hussain	J Knight
R Clarke	M Pulfer	S Hatton
S Ellis	S Smith	
I Gibson	A Sparasci	

Absent: Councillors B Dempsey and J Mockford

Also Present: Councillors P Brown, R Bates, A. Bennett, A Eves, J Knight and S Hatton.

Cabinet Members: Councillors J Belsey, R De Mierre and N Webster.

1 ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.

The Vice-Chairman carried out a roll call to establish attendance at the meeting. The Solicitor to the Council provided information on the format of the virtual meeting.

2 TO NOTE SUBSTITUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4 - SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES ETC.

Councillor Hatton substituted for Councillor Dempsey. Councillor Knight substituted for Cllr Mockford.

3 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillors Dempsey, Ellis, and Mockford.

4 TO RECEIVE DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

None.

5 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2020 were agreed as a correct record and electronically signed by the Chairman.

6 TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

The Chairman had no urgent business.

7 OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS 2019-20.

Rafal Hejne, Interim Head of Digital and Customer Service, introduced the Complaints Annual Report. He noted the positive feedback from the Local Government Ombudsman. Members were recommended to note the report.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 14, which explained why there was a difference in the number of complaints and enquiries received, as some complaints were dealt with outside the reporting year.

A Member queried a decrease in compliments compared to 2018, asking if there was a reason for this. The Interim Head responded that there was no notable reason and that this year the Council has already reached the level of compliments received in 2018.

A Member was glad to see the Council is performing well and thanked officers for their work.

A Member queried a planning issue relating to officers and site visits. The Member noted she had never been accompanied by a planning officer when going on such visits and sought clarity on the current position. The Chairman noted this was planning matter and so outside of the scope of the report. Written clarity was agreed to be provided outside of the meeting.

A Member expressed delight at the number of compliments received by the Council and asked if it would be possible for the Committee to see them. She further cited the Annual Review letter, which emphasises learning, not numbers. The Chair agreed with this request, noting a particular interest in the areas receiving compliments from the public, as did the Interim Head agreed that they would look at how they can communicate on a regular basis the number of compliments received and examples of this best practice to Members.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report. This was approved with 15 votes in favour.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the report.

8 AIR QUALITY.

The report was presented by Adam Dracott, Team Leader for Environmental Protection, to inform Members about the Council's Annual Status Report on air quality and highlight the air quality programme across the District. The Committee was recommended to endorse the approach of the Council on Air Quality Management.

The Team Leader Environmental Protection summarised the findings of the report which relate to the 2019 data sets. He emphasised the importance of working with colleagues at West Sussex County Council, further noting the schedule from the Air Quality Management area action plan.

The Team Leader concluded that two of the last three previous years have seen levels drop below the objective level and remain in line with the national trend, though there are further areas for improvement. He noted that further investigation was required at a site in London Road East Grinstead due to elevated levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) This will involve the installation of an air quality station, which will enable more accurate real-time data for future decision-making.

A Member questioned if the officers were considering the reduction in traffic during the pandemic. Another Member wanted to emphasise the problems of pollution for residents living in properties above shops in busy areas and asked if it was possible to mitigate such circumstances with the County Council. The Team Leader replied that the monitoring being carried out in 2020 reflected lower traffic levels due to the pandemic and therefore an increase in better air quality in general. He added that officers were waiting for guidance from DEFRA concerning the use of this data.

Members discussed the air quality monitoring sites and the function and effectiveness of monitoring. The Team Leader said that there was a review of the monitoring sites every year and they would consider other options for new site locations (including Turners Hill) for next year's review.

There was further discussion about the impact of bonfires as they are a significant source of pollution. The Team Leader noted the Environmental Health Team took a very strong line against fireworks and bonfires during the lockdown, given the nature of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Community thanked the Members for considering the report and added he believed it demonstrated that the Council takes the issue of air quality very seriously. He noted the death of a child in London, which was the first time in the UK that air pollution had been listed as a cause of death and reflected further on the effect of pollution in less affluent areas.

He concluded by thanking officers for providing necessary training for Members.

The report was presented by Adam Dracott, Team Leader for Environmental Protection, to inform Members about the Council's Annual Status Report on air quality and highlight the air quality programme across the District. The Committee was recommended to endorse the approach of the Council on Air Quality Management.

The Team Leader Environmental Protection summarised the findings of the report which relate to the 2019 data sets. He emphasised the importance of working with colleagues at West Sussex County Council, further noting the schedule from the Air Quality Management area action plan.

The Team Leader concluded that two of the last three previous years have seen levels drop below the objective level and remain in line with the national trend, though there are further areas for improvement. He noted that further investigation was required at a site in London Road East Grinstead due to elevated levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) This will involve the installation of an air quality station, which will enable more accurate real-time data for future decision-making.

A Member questioned if the officers were considering the reduction in traffic during the pandemic. Another Member wanted to emphasise the problems of pollution for residents living in properties above shops in busy areas and asked if it was possible to mitigate such circumstances with the County Council. The Team Leader replied that the monitoring being carried out in 2020 reflected lower traffic levels due to the pandemic and therefore an increase in better air quality in general. He added that officers were waiting for guidance from DEFRA concerning the use of this data.

Members discussed the air quality monitoring sites and the function and effectiveness of monitoring. The Team Leader said that there was a review of the monitoring sites every year and they would consider other options for new site locations (including Turners Hill) for next year's review.

There was further discussion about the impact of bonfires as they are a significant source of pollution. The Team Leader noted the Environmental Health Team took a very strong line against fireworks and bonfires during the lockdown, given the nature of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Community thanked the Members for considering the report and added he believed it demonstrated that the Council takes the issue of air quality very seriously. He noted the death of a child in London, which was the first time in the UK that air pollution had been listed as a cause of death and reflected further on the effect of pollution in less affluent areas.

He concluded by thanking officers for providing necessary training for Members.

There were no further indications for comment, therefore the Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report. This was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee endorsed the approach of the Council on air quality management.

9 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services and Solicitor to the Council, introduced the Work Programme, noting there are no items currently scheduled for the March meeting, though he added that could be subject to change.

A Member queried if there was cross-party support for further discussion on the future of Clair Hall. It was decided that this was a matter for the Cabinet to consider before it could lead to a working party discussion.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services welcomed the report, adding that she would meet with the Interim Head of Digital and Customer Service and the Team Leader Environmental Protection to discuss the inclusion of the air quality app on the Council website. The Chair asked for a brief report for the Committee on this matter.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report. This was approved with 12 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstaining.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the Committee's Work Programme as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

10 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 5.35 pm

Chairman