

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 4th April, 2024

Present: Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Chair), Cllr R I B Cannon (Vice-Chair), Cllr M A J Hood (Vice-Chair), Cllr T Bishop, Cllr C Brown, Cllr A Cope, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr D W King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr A Mehmet (substitute), Cllr R W G Oliver (substitute) and Cllr R V Roud (substitute).

Cllrs A G Bennison, K B Tanner, Mrs S Bell* R P Betts*, M D Boughton*, D Keers*, M R Rhodes*, Mrs M Tatton* and M Taylor* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

*participated via MS Teams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G B Hines, S A Hudson and D Thornwell

PART 1 - PUBLIC

OS 24/17 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr Mehmet substitute for Cllr Hudson
- Cllr Roud substitute for Cllr Thornwell
- Cllr Oliver substitute for Cllr Hines

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 17.5 to 17.9 these Councillors had the same rights as the ordinary member of the committee for whom they were substituting.

OS 24/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

OS 24/19 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**OS 24/20 HOUSING ASSOCIATION PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

A proposed Housing Association Performance Framework setting out the data to be requested from the largest Registered Providers, arrangements to review nomination agreements with those providers and how the Housing Association Liaison Panel could be used to ensure Member engagement was attached at Annex 1 for consideration.

Reviewing the approach to a Housing Association Performance Framework was an identified action in the Borough Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan for Year 2.

However, it was reported that the Borough Council would engage with Clarion Housing differently to other registered providers given the size of their portfolio in the Borough. This was reflected in the proposed Framework with a specific section on a meeting programme with Clarion.

Members welcomed the introduction of a Performance Framework so that the Borough Council was aware of registered providers performance and able to assess any potential impacts this performance might have on the authority's activity or its residents. Data would be requested from all Housing Associations with stock in Tonbridge and Malling on at least an annual basis as set out in 1 of Annex 1. To address concerns raised by the Committee, information on damp and mould complaints and issues would also be requested from all Housing Associations.

It was also noted that there was renewed focus by Clarion Housing in respect of 'voids' and whilst better data was being received it was difficult to share information with Members on the grounds of confidentiality and GDPR. However, consideration would be given as to whether data sharing was an option.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Housing Association Performance Framework be commended to Cabinet for adoption.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**OS 24/21 AGILE SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION**

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health reviewed the implementation of the Agile project and responded to specific questions previously raised by the Committee. Based on the challenges with service delivery experienced by Planning and Building Control following implementation of their modules, the Agile project had

been identified as a red risk on the Borough Council's strategic risk register.

Careful consideration was given to the responses detailed in 1.2 of the report which outlined the procurement process, financial and value for money implications, decision making and delivery arrangements and timetables.

Members sought clarity around spending in respect of the original proposal and expressed disappointment at the £200,000 additional cost as a result of additional project management. It was confirmed that the overall cost of the implementation project to the Borough Council was in the region of £397,000 (as set out in 1.4.1, 1.4.2 and 1.4.4 of the report). These represented one-off capital costs and were not an ongoing financial commitment. There was also an ongoing revenue saving of circa £50,000 as a result of moving to an alternative software provider. It was reiterated that the previous Uniform platform was no longer compliant in many areas of legislation, such as GDPR and cyber-security, and the new Agile platform should represent value for money in due course.

There was in-depth discussion on a number of factors, including the underestimation of the scale of the work required, the challenging working relationship with the new provider and whether important lessons could be learned around procurement, implementation, due diligence and management of major projects. It was also felt that greater consideration should have been given to the consequences of new software and the impacts on stretched resources. Detailed responses were provided by the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and the Head of IT.

Members noted that Internal Audit was undertaking a 'post implementation review' of the modules already operating and this would be finalised in April 2024. This was considered an important interim step in reviewing the project to ensure that any lessons learned could be implemented for the remaining Agile modules. It was also noted that the Audit Committee had asked to review Agile from a risk perspective and relevant officers would be present at that meeting.

OS 24/22 CORPORATE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were aligned to the Corporate Strategy 2023-27 and monitoring on a quarterly or annual basis. The data provided in the report related to the period up to the end of December 2023.

A request to monitor complaints in respect of taxi licences (KPI 112 and 113) was noted.

OS 24/23 RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE

The decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members during March 2024 were presented for information and noted by the Committee.

OS 24/24 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme setting out potential matters to be scrutinised during 2024/25 was noted. A progress report on the implementation of Agile would be included for the meeting on 12 September 2024.

Members were invited to suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**OS 24/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm