

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

Thursday, 26th January, 2023

Present:-

Councillor L Collins (Chair)

Councillors Blakemore
Borrell
Coy

Councillors Dyke
Hollingworth
Snowdon

Donna Reddish, Service Director Corporate +
Grant Ilett, Strategic Health, Safety and Risk Manager ++
Councillor Sharon Blank, Cabinet Member for Governance ++

Attended for Minute No. 42 +
Attended for Minute No. 43 ++

40 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

41 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Catt, Caulfield, Flood, Gilby, Kellman and Serjeant.

42 **DEPUTY LEADER - COUNCIL PLAN 2023 - 2027 DEVELOPMENT**

The Service Director Corporate presented an update on the development of the 2023 – 2027 Council Plan. The new four year plan, aligned with the Council's medium term financial plan, would define the authority's key priorities. A year one delivery plan and updated Performance Management Framework would facilitate the measurement of success and effective review of performance.

The committee heard that the vision and values of the Council remained unchanged, as did the first two priorities; 'Making Chesterfield a thriving

borough' and 'Improving quality of life for local people'. The third priority was titled 'Building a more resilient Council'.

Work on the plan was ongoing, particularly in terms of data gathering and building the context in which the plan would operate including legislative changes, political activity, the financial climate and complementing the People Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Discussion took place around how success would be measured and whether there were any metrics in place to measure growth. The Service Director Corporate explained that a variety of performance measures will be included in the Council Plan Delivery plan.

Members also asked about areas that the Council is not directly responsible for, such as education and skills and how this could be improved. It was acknowledged that the Council has a major partnership role and has a number of levers which influence this agenda. Examples were given of previous successes, such as working with the University of Derby to establish the Chesterfield St. Helena campus, being an exemplar employer in terms of apprenticeships, becoming the first Apprentice Town, applying for funding to facilitate skills acquisition and being the conduit that brings key stakeholders together.

It was highlighted that the low wages of apprentices is a major barrier to learning, heightened by the cost of living crisis and it was suggested that the Council had a role to play in lobbying the Government. These discussions were already taking place at a regional level and a possible option for members would be to propose a motion to Council on the subject.

A question was asked about how the Council hoped to achieve its aspiration of 'Helping people to be healthier and more active' and the Service Director gave a number of examples;

- Maximising opportunities for active travel as the lead Planning authority
- Being involved in the Walk Derbyshire initiative with Public Health colleagues
- Ensuring the whole leisure estate is accessible to more people
- Building safer communities using the new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
- Designing out crime in new developments

RESOLVED –

That the progress in developing the 2023 – 2027 Council Plan be noted.

43 CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE - EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Strategic Health, Safety and Risk Manager presented an update to the committee on Emergency Planning (EP) and Business Continuity (BC).

Key Legislation that covered EP and BC activities came into effect after the 11th Sept 2001 terrorist attack. The legislation outlined the Council's statutory duties as a category 1 responder including;

- Risk assessment
- Emergency planning
- Warning and informing the public
- Co-operating with partner agencies
- Sharing information with partner agencies
- Business continuity
- Business continuity promotion

The Council has detailed emergency and business continuity plans in place and these are periodically updated. Service specific business continuity plans were also regularly reviewed.

The Council had a number of emergency structures that would be initiated to effectively manage an emergency or business continuity event. The resource required will be commensurate to the size and scale of the emergency.

The Council continued to have contracted resource and partnership support agreement with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to deliver key Emergency Planning and Business Continuity functions.

The Council also has dedicated internal resources to support response duties for emergency incidents.

The Council had two senior officers that held emergency planning liaison roles. The Service Director - Corporate and the Strategic Health, Safety and Risk Manager. These two officers worked alongside the DCC Emergency Planning colleagues and the Corporate Leadership Team to respond to an emergency or business continuity event.

The working expectations were outlined within a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and DCC.

- A new SLA was signed and agreed as of 1st April 2022 covering the next three financial years.
- Consideration of the future health, safety and risk team to help build further resilience for EP/BC resource.

The Committee heard that senior officers of the Council received periodic Emergency Planning and Business Continuity training.

Two examples included:

- The completion of a Resilience Direct training exercise during 2022 by the EPO.
- A winter pressures briefing from DCC - Emergency planning colleagues to the Corporate Leadership Team

The Derbyshire Prepared website (*Derbyshireprepared.org.uk*) remained a key source of emergency planning information for officers, Councillors and the wider community.

The Derbyshire Prepared website included flood advice, events planning guidance, business continuity advice and what to do before, during and after an emergency.

Members heard that the Council was investigating opportunities to improve and promote the signposting of the utility companies' priority services registers for vulnerable customers.

The Covid-19 Emergency Planning/Business Continuity report presented to Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in November 2020 outlined how the Coronavirus pandemic had presented an unprecedented risk,

disruption and required significant changes to Council working practices. Urgent work had been carried out during the pandemic to ensure that the Council had arrangements in place to create and maintain safe working environments.

During March 2022 the Council moved from a distinct response phase to 'living with covid' phase in line with and following the end of Government's restrictions and updated public health guidance. The changes in working arrangements came into effect from 7th March 2022.

It was noted that as of 1st April 2022, certain notifiable absences were no longer reportable absences to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Therefore, for the ongoing financial year only two coronavirus related absences were on record. Since 1st April 2022 all COVID-19 absences were treated in the same manner as other illnesses, by self-certification rules and fit notes.

The Council maintained generic coronavirus arrangements including: a Council wide risk assessment, workplace guidance and FAQs. All these documents were available for staff and others to access via their line managers and the Council's Aspire intranet.

The national Coronavirus Pandemic public inquiry commenced in 2022. The Council and other local authorities responded to the first request for information in November 2022.

Thanks were noted to the Transformation Programme Manager who was an interim EPLO (Emergency Planning Liaison Officer).

Examples of key EP/BC activities included:

- The Council's Universal Contact List had periodic updates and new versions were issued to officers.
- Business continuity arrangements were reviewed
- The local Flood plan was reviewed and updated
- Control Of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) sites plan reviews were completed
- The Health, Safety and Risk team had provided safety plan review support work covering counter terrorism preparations for several higher risk premises and other significant projects

- The EPO continued to support and advise Safety Advisory Group (SAG) activities

It was highlighted that the only event which met the formal criteria for a Safety Advisory Group was the Chesterfield Fireworks event at Stand Road Park. In addition, the EPO also liaised with other event organisers for events that occurred within the borough.

The core Council representation at SAGs included the service Environmental Health Officers, Licensing, Building Control and Community Safety.

Emergency planning and Business Continuity incidents of note during 2022/23 included:

- Storms Dudley and Eunice in Feb 2022
- Operation London Bridge
- Heavy rain in October and November although no significant flood impacts were reported to the Council

Discussion

Members suggested ways to improve the awareness of the utility providers' vulnerable persons register including a 'Your chesterfield' article and links on the Council's website.

The resilience of the Council's ICT systems was discussed and the plans in place should a cyber- attack occur. The ability of the Council to provide temporary accommodation for residents in the event of an emergency was also considered. It was explained that there were a number of rest centres identified in the Borough for short term respite and beyond this the Homelessness Service would become involved.

The Strategic Health, Safety and Risk Manager outlined the priorities for 2023/24 as;

- Improving team resilience
- Improvement and enhancement of current plans and arrangements
- Working on a number of projects such as public realm works, to highlight Counter terrorism (CT) mitigation and Health and

Safety input to try and design out future emergencies from happening.

- Following the introduction of Protect Duty/ Martyr's Law, undertaking a significant piece of work in terms of security assessments and CT mitigation for public buildings, venues, market areas and parks etc.

44 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was reported for information.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

45 **SCRUTINY MONITORING**

The Monitoring Schedule was reported for information.

RESOLVED –

That the Monitoring Schedule be noted.

46 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

The Work Programme was reported.

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be noted.

47 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

There were no developments to report.

48 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 17 November, 2022 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.