

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

Thursday, 27th January, 2022

Present:-

Councillor Flood (Chair)

Councillors	Blakemore	Councillors	Hollingworth
	Coy		Kellman
	Dyke		Kelly
	Fordham		Snowdon
	T Gilby		

Councillor Tricia Gilby, Leader +
Councillor Jean Innes, Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers +++

Amanda Clayton, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer ++
Grant Ilett, Strategic Health & Safety and Risk Manager +++
Charlotte Kearsey, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Ade McCormick, Executive Director +++

+ Attended for Minute No. 34
++ Attended for Minute No. 35
+++ Attended for Minute No. 39

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

No declarations of interest were received.

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Borrell, Caulfield and Catt.

33 FORWARD PLAN

The Forum considered the Forward Plan.

Councillor Fordham raised concerns about reports being added to the Forward Plan without enough time for pre-decision scrutiny to be carried out as the Forum meets every two months. The Joint Chair advised that at previous Forum meetings she had asked scrutiny members to check the Forward Plan and to email the Joint Chairs about items on the Forward Plan which arise between meetings.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

34 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Forum considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

The Leader of the Council provided a monitoring update regarding HS2. The Forum was informed that there had been some misunderstandings in the press and HS2 had not been cancelled but the HS2 tracks would only go as far as the East Midlands Parkway. HS2 trains would then travel from the Parkway to Chesterfield on Victorian tracks. Electrification of the Midlands Mainline was due to start in January but this had been promised twice before.

The Leader emphasised that the Derbyshire Rail Industry Innovation Vehicle (DRIIVe) at Barrow Hill was still required to train people to support the increase in rail innovation.

Lobbying was continuing along with work on alternative plans.

Members noted the disappointing news, agreed with the need to deliver DRIIVe at Barrow Hill and thanked the Leader for the update.

Members enquired how long it may take to revise and deliver the alternative plans; the Leader explained that it was difficult to tell how long because there remained outstanding responses from the Government but as much pressure as possible was being applied across the East Midlands.

RESOLVED –

1. That a further monitoring update from the Leader about HS2 be scheduled for the second half of the 2022/23 scrutiny work programme.
2. That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

35

SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP PROGRESS UPDATES

Scrutiny Project Group on Air Quality

Project group support officer, Amanda Clayton, presented the report of the scrutiny project group and asked Members to approve the recommendations.

In July 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency with the purpose of enabling Chesterfield to become a low carbon, resilient and sustainable borough and in February 2020 the council adopted a formal climate change action plan. The scrutiny project group was formed to look at the perceived problem of air quality within the Borough, particularly in relation to traffic hotspots on key routes, congestion around schools and increasing numbers of asthma/chronic breathing conditions.

The aims of the project group were to:

- Identify existing plans and strategies in respect of air quality within the Borough.
- Identify areas of concern within the Borough and the management plans in place.
- Examine air quality around schools within the Borough and if any issues were identified to suggest ways in which the schools can impact/mitigate against them.
- Identify any opportunities to improve the air quality in the Borough thus contributing to the Council's vision of a clean, green and attractive Borough, where our open spaces and built heritage are valued.

RESOLVED –

That the recommendations of the Scrutiny Project Group's review of Air Quality, as detailed below, be approved:

1. That the Scrutiny Project Group conclude its work in this area.

2. That the subject of air quality remains a key element of the Council's Climate Change work to ensure continued improvement for the benefit of all residents of the Borough.

36 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered.

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be approved.

37 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

There was no update.

38 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 18 November, 2021 were presented.

RESOLVED –

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

39 CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE - EMERGENCY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

The Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers and Executive Director attended to present a report about Emergency and Business Continuity Planning.

Since 2005 Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) had contracted with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to deliver an Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service. To further strengthen the capacity and co-ordination of emergency or business continuity events two senior CBC officers, the Service Director - Corporate and Strategic Health & Safety and Risk Manager, hold emergency planning liaison roles. These officers would work alongside the DCC Emergency Planning team and CBC's

Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team to respond to an emergency or business continuity event. Senior officers receive regular Emergency Planning and Business Continuity training, including training on Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles which would be used in response to a major multi agency incident.

The Council had a detailed emergency plan and business continuity plan in place, which was regularly updated. Service specific business continuity plans were also regularly reviewed and updated.

The Council leadership teams would review, agree and document the priority services for protection and restoration in an emergency. This process would then inform the activities which would need to be undertaken when the business continuity plan was invoked. Individual Corporate Business Continuity Plans existed in respect of winter planning, flood planning, flu pandemic and more recently Coronavirus.

The number and type of strategic and tactical groups that would be initiated to effectively manage the emergency or business continuity event would depend on the size and scale of the event. This would be determined when an emergency or business continuity event was triggered.

The officer's report detailed the business continuity structure which had been implemented to enable the management of coronavirus business continuity activity across Derbyshire.

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 unprecedented risks, disruption and changes to Council working practices. It highlighted that the business continuity plans needed further review to ensure they incorporated all the learning from the new pandemic and were updated appropriately. Over the period of the pandemic to date, Business Continuity Plans had been updated and any new developments had been incorporated. Urgent work had been carried out to ensure that the Council had arrangements in place to create and maintain safe working environments within council buildings and workspaces which included the creation of a network of support to enable home working for many of the Council's staff. Where there were capacity pressures on key services,

such as the Crematorium, some staff were redeployed to provide service support as part of our business continuity arrangements.

Objective 1 - How successful have the Council's plans and actions been in response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

A number of further arrangements had continued to be kept in place specifically in response to the Coronavirus pandemic e.g. three task and finish groups, regular engagement with partners through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) emergency response arrangements and Coronavirus focussed leadership team meetings. Each of the three task and finish groups focussed on the response and recovery of a key theme: Economic, Community and Resources. Both the Economic and Community themes had established strategic recovery plans, which have been previously approved by Cabinet and were in implementation stage.

It had been broadly acknowledged that the work of the Resources T&F group along with managers, teams and Trade Union colleagues across the organisation had been effective. There have been no staff deaths attributed to Coronavirus and only four RIDDOR coronavirus incidents reported since the pandemic began.

At the end of 2021, the Council had managed to maintain service delivery in line with Government restrictions and Council H&S guidance.

One of the main risks to maintaining business continuity across services was the availability of staff to deliver the service. This was being monitored on a weekly basis via the Resources task and finish group and in conjunction with the Corporate Leadership Team to proactively respond to any emerging staffing issues.

Objective 2 – What lessons have been learnt from the Council's emergency and business continuity planning relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

One of the key attributes to how effective the Council had been during the pandemic had been a willingness to learn, be decisive and apply changes without delay.

The key areas of learning were:

- Don't be afraid to change, it was the constant change that kept things on track;

- A no blame culture - learning from one another had been very beneficial;
- Use data and experience to plan for a better future;
- The decision making process which had been developed over time had worked well, there had been:
 - Quick access to decisions when required;
 - Strong relationship between governance and decision-making groups;
 - Open communication.
- Regular virtual meetings and updates across the organisation had worked well.

It had been key to utilise the strengths of staff and the Council had sustained business continuity due to the dedication and commitment of Council employees. The Council would continue to work with partners across the business continuity network to keep up to date, incorporate shared learning and ensure that business continuity plans were kept up to date.

Further to the November 2020 report to Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum, the Council was now in a far more resilient position to respond to and effectively manage future challenges.

Objective 3 - To consider other emergencies which could occur and plan a response.

From an emergency planning perspective, a response to an emergency was dependent on the size and scale of the emergency or business continuity event. This would determine the nature and scale of the response and would be determined when an emergency or business continuity event was triggered.

With regard to the consideration of 'other emergencies which may occur', the current emergency plan incorporated the likely emergency events which were considered possible.

There was a risk regarding staff not continuing to comply with Council Covid-19 safety measures over the longer term. Many of the previous Government restrictions had been removed, but the Council had maintained a more cautious approach as there remained a threat to staffing levels due to isolation and positive testing numbers.

Since the report to Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in November 2020, the corporate responsibility for business continuity had been re-assigned to the Service Director - Corporate. The Service Director had recently recruited a Strategic Health & Safety and Risk Manager, who would work with the Service Director in the emergency planning liaison roles on behalf of the Council. There were plans for a strategic review regarding the future of emergency planning and business continuity and it was suggested that a further report would be brought to a future Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting to outline this work.

Members thanked CBC staff for their work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members noted that DCC had not been mentioned in references to partnership working and suggested that there were learning points to raise with DCC as joint working could have been more productive. The Executive Director advised that DCC had participated in the LRF for Derbyshire which had been a very effective group.

Members enquired about the support which had been provided to staff who had been required to work from home and then adjusting to returning to working in offices in the recovery phase. The Executive Director explained that staff had been provided with the equipment they would need to carry out their work, digital support progress had been significant and staff had been surveyed to understand the preferences going forward which had found that 80% of staff wanted to continue with a hybrid approach to working.

Members asked about how information had been shared between Local Authorities and the Executive Director advised that information and examples of best practice had been shared through the LRF.

Members noted that climate change would increase the instances of excessive heat which would increasingly become an issue in work places and enquired whether this would fall under emergency planning. The Executive Director advised that this would be a health and safety risk and he believed that an emergency response would be required.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Emergency and Business Continuity Planning report be noted.

2. That a report regarding the strategic review of the future of emergency planning and business continuity be brought to a future Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting.