

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 20 June 2018

Time: 7.00 - 7.35 pm

PRESENT: Councillor D Knights (in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, M C Appleyard, A D Collingwood, A E Hill, M E Knight, Mrs W J Mallen, Ms C J Oliver, R Raja, J A Savage, D A C Shakespeare OBE, P R Turner, C Whitehead and R Wilson,

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE and H L McCarthy

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The new Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission, Councillor Knights welcomed the members to the meeting and explained his future aims for the Commission.

Councillor Knights emphasised that he hoped to fulfil the role of Chairman to his best ability. He added that he would be happy to meet with any member of the Commission if they wished to discuss any issues to allow for a better understanding of views.

Councillor Knights explained that he was committed to good, effective and transparent scrutiny. His vision was for two clear functions, 'blue sky thinking' and supporting portfolio holders. It was noted that the aim was to assist with improved decision making and to demonstrate to the public that effective scrutiny was undertaken.

The Chairman highlighted that he was a fan of modernisation, the role of the Commission was crucial and he hoped to bring real change for residents.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted.

It was noted that Councillor Collingwood arrived late to the meeting and had provided apologies.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 14 March 2018 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. UPDATE ON THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE DISTRICT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the District Task and Finish Group, Councillor Chris Whitehead provided an update on the status of the Group.

Councillor Whitehead explained that ASB was difficult to define and included a large scope of problems such as road rage, vandalism and street drinking. The TFG were considering the issues and the level of the problem of ASB in the District.

It was noted that several representatives had been interviewed including representatives from the Police such as the Chief Inspector and stakeholders including Red Kite and the Wycombe Homeless Connection.

At a meeting the Police had informed the TFG there was a lack of resources and it was difficult to recruit new officers to the area. The Police indicated that the problem of parking in the town centre was an issue for prospective police officers. It was suggested that WDC could offer parking concessions to police staff to help with recruitment.

Councillor Whitehead explained that there were a number of different agencies and stakeholders involved in dealing with ASB. However no one was currently ultimately responsible and he believed that this should be changed.

The following points were also noted:

- There were 11 statutory and 9 non-statutory agencies involved and there was scope for modernisation.
- Street wardens could be considered.
- Passive begging was not a crime.
- The police had suggested low cost CCTV systems in off licences.
- There was a problem with public toilets being used by drug addicts. It was suggested to close these and have a scheme to use toilets in pubs and restaurants.
- A better night time economy in town centres deterred ASB.
- It was reported that there was a problem with beggars knocking on doors with a note asking for money.
- There was an Anti-Social Behaviour Policy at Wycombe District Council however it was uncertain if this was being implemented.
- Some councils had an app to report ASB and it was suggested that this type of reporting device could be used.
- There was a problem with very strong alcohol being sold by off licences.

Councillor Whitehead confirmed that further meetings had been scheduled to interview external stakeholders and to consider the final report recommendations. It was expected that the final report would be considered by the Improvement and Review Commission at its meeting in September 2018 and then onto Cabinet in September or October 2018 for consideration.

6. UPDATE ON THE RIVER WYE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission provided the group with information regarding the Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group on behalf of Chairman Councillor McCarthy.

It was noted that there had been no further developments. The outcome of the economic assessment was expected to be available at the end of July 2018. The final recommendations report was then expected to be considered at the Improvement and Review Commission meeting in September 2018 and then onto Cabinet for consideration in September or October 2018.

7. COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME & CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Commission considered the work programme report featured along with the appended Cabinet Forward Plan and Commission Work Programme.

The Chairman of the Commission noted that the Budget Task and Finish Group would be established in the autumn to consider the draft budget in one phase from October to December 2018.

It was suggested new senior officers be invited to a future meeting to provide their views on the Council and update the Commission on future work plans.

8. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

9. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

There were no supplementary items.

10. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan - Senior Democratic Services Officer
Catherine Whitehead - Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy.