

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WHITTLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2017

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Roberts (Chair), Allen, Douglas, Gillias, Keeling and Pacey-Day

Also present: Nick Andrews (Rugby Youth Council)

Officers:

Mannie Ketley (Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer), Rob Back (Head of Growth and Investment), Dave Wortley (Benefits Manager), Matthew Deaves (Communication, Consultation and Information Manager), Michael Beirne (Economic Investment Officer) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2016 were approved and signed by the Chair.

27. APOLOGIES

There were none.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 4 of Part 1 - Councillor Douglas declared a general non-pecuniary interest by virtue of his employment as Policy and Campaigns Officer for Property Mark.

29. WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 4) concerning an update on aspects of welfare reform since the Summer Budget 2015 and Autumn Statement came into effect.

The Benefits Manager presented the report and during discussion the following points were made:

Significant loss of income to the council occurred through the migration of customers temporarily placed into bed and breakfast accommodation from housing benefit onto Universal Credit. There were delays both in Universal Credit payments and administrative processes. In the past Housing Benefit was based on the day-to-day position but Universal Credit differs in that one single day is representative of a month. The Department for Work and Pensions recognises there is an issue and

the situation should be resolved before the significant roll out of Universal Credit commences in the autumn.

A further update report will be submitted in the spring of 2018, unless significant new information with regard to Social Housing Rents and Supported Accommodation becomes available before then.

RESOLVED THAT – The Benefits Manager be thanked for his report.

30. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2016/17 QUARTER 3

The committee had previously been requested to bring copies of the relevant Cabinet report from 6 February 2017 to the meeting. Due to the length of time between Cabinet and scrutiny meetings, and to avoid the need to rely on paper copies, it was agreed that in future the report would be available on the C-Touch screen for members to view.

The Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer gave members a verbal report on the key financial issues including:

- The financial position was favourable and the council was expecting more than £250,000 credit by the end of the year.
- The General Fund Balances were forecast to be just above £2.1 million by the end of the municipal year.
- The HRA showed an anticipated favourable variance of over £300,000 for year-end.
- Housing rents were set by Council on 1 March 2016.
- The HRA balance at 31 March 2016 was over £2.8 million and it was anticipated this figure would fall to £1.4 million by the end of March 2017.
- There were a number of major variances in the General Fund Capital programme.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

All 2018 budgets were based on the current inflation rate, which was around two per cent. The council's treasury management consultants forecast in line with the same level as banks.

Inflationary increases were not factored in when budgets were prepared. IT software systems usually have the annual index built in. Other goods and services do not provide for inflation increases, but pay increases were an exception to this. Few agreements were linked into payments over multiple years and were usually dealt with within 12 months.

Members asked whether the executive should make provision for the erosion of buying power created by the rate of inflation being higher than the increase in council tax, and were informed that there were many variables affecting exposure. The medium term financial plan continues to retain debt but the rate of re-financing loans must be considered. Advice would be taken from the treasury management consultants on what to build in, but it was difficult to extract inflation versus council tax. Council tax varies, depending on the number of properties, and this figure was based on estimates in the medium term. In some cases, such as the second phase of development at Elliott's Field, the council can be fairly confident on when the build would be complete.

Members discussed the adoption and high repair costs of bridges on the Great Central Way. Some time ago a ten-year programme was developed based on priority levels identified following risk assessments that were carried out. The budgets were set in line with that ten-year plan.

RESOLVED THAT – the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer be thanked for her report.

31. RUGBY YOUTH COUNCIL

The committee received a verbal report from Nick Andrews updating the committee on the work of the Youth Council. The main points were as follows:

The election for Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) and the county's youth council (VOX) had taken place. Nick Andrews was elected as the county's MYP representative.

The number of representatives on Youth Parliament and VOX had doubled this year with the MYP and deputy MYP, and four people being elected on to VOX.

Around 14,000 young people voted in the MYP election, and of the votes cast, there were only 80 spoilt ballot papers. As well as selecting representatives, young people also chose the issues that were the most important to them. The top issues identified were:

- Mental health
- Racism and religious discrimination
- Living wage
- Votes at 16 for all public elections
- Services for young people
- Environment
- Equality and diversity
- Youth employment/apprenticeships
- Curriculum for life

Nick Andrews reported that his key interest was mental health and bringing joined up thinking to schools and the health service.

Members commented that the mental health aspect could link to scrutiny work being carried out in the current work programme.

A suggestion was made that the youth council could give a presentation to all councillors sometime in the future.

RESOLVED THAT – the committee thanked Nick Andrews for attending the meeting.

32. COMMUNICATIONS AT RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the joint meeting of Brooke and Whittle Committees the topic of green waste was raised, and as part of those discussions it was agreed that the Communication, Consultation and Information Manager should be invited to attend a scrutiny committee meeting.

The Communication, Consultation and Information Manager gave the committee a power point presentation on the issues relating to the green bin collection service, the general approach to communications and marketing, and the promotion of Rugby as a destination. A copy is attached at Annex 1 to the minutes.

In addition to the presentation the following points were raised:

Green Bin Suspension

Unlike the previous campaign in 2009, when the original 3 bin system was introduced, there were a number of challenges relating to the suspension of the green bin service including:

- The original Cabinet decision was taken on 3 October 2016 and the communications team informed on 4 October 2016. The Steering Group came into effect on 3 November.
- The print deadline was only 1½ days after the Steering Group defined the content of the message.
- There was a lack of clarity in the message which covered a number of points:
 - to suspend the green waste collection;
 - to allow a black bin collection for everyone;
 - to save money; and
 - to allow the service to be re-organised and made more efficient in the long term.
- The situation in relation to the savings being made was changed by the county council providing funding which changed the message.
- There was a need to be very specific in the message sent out to households.
- Due to the tight deadline, the method used to distribute the leaflets to every household was the only option available. While the quality of delivery was good, not all of the leaflets were noticed by householders.
- The same leaflet needed to be delivered to every household, but with the fortnightly cycle of collections there were ten different combinations of collection possible.
- If more time had been available, the message could have been explained better. Some of the issues included:
 - Householders struggled to understand the message.
 - There was no external media support.
 - There was no stakeholder support and WCC was not supportive of the changes.
 - The service delivery promised did not take place and bins were collected on different days to those stated in the leaflet.
 - There was an issue with the information held and parts of the website were running on out of date data.

Future

- The position in relation to the collection next Christmas was clear so there should be no issues at the end of this year.
- Clear information about charging for the new garden waste collection service was sent out in leaflet form with council tax bills.

Public Information – general approach

- Since 2008 the role of printed media has changed and it was no longer the most important communication channel.
- Local newspapers were no longer printed in Rugby and circulation had declined significantly.
- Social media was much more relevant, particularly the use of photographs and video.
- In general, literacy levels were poor and language must be accessible to all.
- Content is king – our media contents and approach should lead the coverage in local newspapers.
- More engagement direct with the public was needed.
- Information should be representative of the council and should explain services and how to access them.
- The focus should be more on the future and what is coming up, rather than what has already happened.
- Increased engagement in events allows for services to be more deliberate and better planned.

Challenges included:

- Fake news – comments becoming fact lead to misinterpretation.
- A need to be precise about language used.
- Social media 'keyboard warriors'.

Education

- An example given was the Warwickshire Prepared information. The aim was to offer information more in this style, based on social graphics rather than sharing policy documents.
- Facebook – the separate service accounts have been replaced with a corporate account. Information shared was more analytical, including more photographs and videos to better engage with the public and get messages across.
- Over the past seven days 35,000 people had been reached and 8,132 engaged in those posts.
- There was a separate Facebook page called Rugby Tu i Teraz used to engage the Polish community.
- Other forms of social media included Twitter and Instagram.
- YouTube was one area to be developed further.
- An overview was maintained and used to optimise what appears, how users were accessing information and gather data on what works best.

Promotion of Rugby as a destination

- Place marketing – what is it about Rugby – where you live, work or shop?
- The council is responsible, to some degree, to promote Rugby.

- New branding was created last November with the copy line ‘the Rugby town’, and the strapline ‘find yourself here’. The launch was linked to the opening of the Hall of Fame and generated more interest than the attraction itself.
- Town centre partners were involved in the delivery of the new branding which was designed to unify destination management.
- A new visitor guide was produced.

During further discussion, the following points were raised:

The process for individuals to sign up to the garden waste collection service was made as simple as possible.

The move from newspapers to social media allowed multiple audiences to be reached.

Social media was more immediate.

Very few members of the public attended the recent scrutiny workshop, and with the challenging financial path ahead, there was a need to engage with the public more.

A member commented that the website contained too many lists and layers.

Social media trends were changing. Facebook was becoming out dated and more young people were using Snapchat.

The Communication, Consultation and Information Manager reported that an overview of reports going to Cabinet was maintained, he attended regular meetings with the Leader and was in contact with portfolio holders. Heads of Services were involved in deciding the level of information to be made public.

There was more that could be done to engage with the public in a meaningful way. Rural areas had different issues and often parishes did not feel part of the borough.

Rural areas suffer from a lack of broadband service and mobile phone signal. Ways of how to get news and information to those areas and engage them could be explored further.

Members agreed that communication and public engagement was a topic for further scrutiny.

RESOLVED THAT – the Communicaton, Consultation and Information Manager be thanked for his presentation.

33. REVIEW OF A PROPOSED GREEN PLAQUE SCHEME

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 7) concerning the draft one-page strategy for the review of a proposed Green Plaque Scheme.

The review would focus on representing Rugby’s heritage through initiatives to increase town centre footfall.

The committee agreed the content of the draft one-page strategy. The next stage would be for Democratic Services officers to seek nominations for membership of the task group.

RESOLVED THAT – the draft one-page strategy be approved.

34. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 8) concerning the current work programme and progress of scrutiny reviews.

The Chair thanked committee members for their attendance and invaluable input at the overview and scrutiny work programme workshop held on 8 March which members agreed had been very good.

The scrutiny Chair's and Vice-Chairs were due to meet on 16 March to discuss the outcomes of the workshop and agree the topics to be included in the work programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED THAT – the report be noted.

35. VOTE OF THANKS TO CHAIR

RESOLVED THAT – the Committee placed on record its appreciation of the work undertaken by Councillor Roberts in his capacity as Chair of the Committee for the 2016/17 municipal year.

CHAIR



Communications at Rugby Borough Council

Matthew Deaves

(01788) 533562

Communications at Rugby Borough Council

- Perfect storm
- Public information
- Promotion

CLEAN, GREEN & SAFE



Three bin system - 2009

- Preparation
- Clarity of message
- Consistency of message
- Specific householder instructions
- Media support
- Stakeholder support
- Service delivery

CLEAN, GREEN & SAFE



Green bin suspension

- Preparation
- Clarity of message
- Consistency of message
- Specific householder instructions
- Media support
- Stakeholder support
- Service delivery

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Public information

- Role of printed media
- Rise of social media
- Video and images
- Reading ages
- “Content is King”

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Public information

- Represent the council (you)
- Explain services and how to access them
- What's coming up

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New challenges

- “Fake news”
- Social media “keyboard warriors”
- Education

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FLOODING



Flooding affects somewhere in the UK every year. In Warwickshire, significant flooding occurred in 1998, 2007 and, to a lesser extent, in 2016.

Thousands of homes and businesses in Warwickshire can be affected by flooding. The most serious flooding comes from rivers that over top their banks, but anywhere can be affected by surface water flooding.

Surface water causes floods when it rains so much that the water cannot drain away quickly enough. Surface water flooding is made worse when runoff from fields and roads adds to rainwater from other sources.

PREPARING FOR FLOODING

Sign up to the free Floodline service to receive flood warnings by telephone, text or email.

You can register with Floodline online at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings or by calling 0345 9881188



Plan where you would go if you had to leave your home or place of work quickly. How would you get there if the roads or railways are flooded?



Prepare a grab bag. What would you need if you had to leave in a hurry? What would your family or your pets need? See page 24.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Protect your property. Water can enter a house through air bricks and drains as well as through doors and windows. Products such as door seals and valves for drains can help.

SEAL VENTS



SEAL DOORS



'NON-RETURN' VALVES



DEALING WITH FLOODING WHEN IT HAPPENS

Put your plans into action. Prepare your flood defences and follow any advice given in flood warnings.

If your property is in imminent danger, move valuables and furniture upstairs and switch off the water, electricity and gas supplies. Take your grab bag and go to your chosen place of refuge.



Do not drive through floodwater. Just a few inches of water is enough to float your car and damage your engine. Most deaths caused by flooding happen when people are trapped in their car. A lot of properties are damaged unnecessarily when people drive through floodwater, creating large bow waves.



WHAT WE WILL DO

We will help parish councils and other communities prepare their own plans for dealing with emergencies. We do this through regular meetings and events.

If large numbers of residents are affected we will set up evacuation centres in safe places near to affected communities.



We provide sand bags for parish councils to distribute. However, sand bags are time consuming to fill and difficult to use effectively. They are not a substitute for proper planning.



FINDING OUT MORE


For more information on the steps you can take to prepare for flooding, visit www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding

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Rugby Borough Council
7


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>  **Rugby Art Gallery and Museum** 5 +17% 879 +46% 227 +15% ★
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>  **Rugby sport and leisure** 2 +50% 565 +37% 24 +98% ★
Page ID: 175265912537231
Page likes | People reached | Post engagements

>  **BENN Hall** 6 +25% 1,242 +5% 365 +58% ★
Page ID: 501846879850752
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Right now

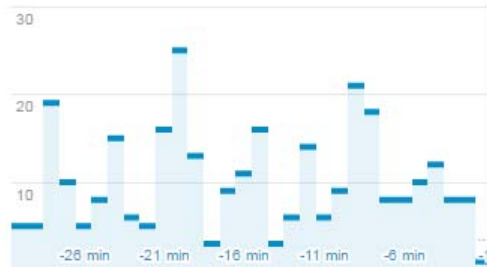
24

active users on site

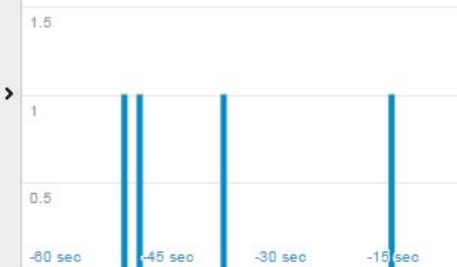


Page Views

Per minute



Per second



Top Referrals:

Source	Active Users ↓
1. contactcentrehomepag e.rugby.gov.uk	1

Top Social Traffic:

Source	Active Users ↓
There is no data for this view.	

Top Keywords:

Keyword	Active Users ↓
1. (not provided)	8
2. rugby district council planning	1

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Active Page	Active Users ↓	Percentage
1. /	5	20.83%
2. /info/20006/household_was...waste_collection_service	4	16.67%
3. /aboutyourbill	1	4.17%
4. /gardenwaste	1	4.17%
5. /info/20002/planning	1	4.17%
6. /info/20006/household_was...aste_collection_service/3	1	4.17%
7. /info/20011/council_tax/12/council_tax_reduction	1	4.17%
8. /info/20019/dog_wardens_a...eport_a_stray_or_lost_dog	1	4.17%
9. /info/20044/keeping_fit_a...healthy/98/change_makers	1	4.17%
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Top Locations:



Promotion

- ~~Promoting council services~~
- Place marketing
- The Rugby Town

CLEAN, GREEN & SAFE





SINCE 1823
THE
RUGBY
TOWN

FOR GREAT BRANDS AND
INDEPENDENT SHOPS



FIND YOURSELF HERE



PLACE CASTLE ARMS CASTLE STREET CHARLES WARREN CLOSE CHURCH GATE STREET ALBERT ROAD ALBERT STREET ARNOLD STREET BANK STREET BARN ROAD BARNFIELD PLACE
PLACE DRURY LANE ALBANY STREET BISHOPSGATE PLACE ELBOROUGH STREET THE ROAD CHESTNUT PLACE CHURCH STREET CHURCH STREET CHURCH STREET CHURCH STREET CHURCH STREET
JAMES STREET LAWRENCE SHERIFF STREET LITTLE CLAYTON STREET FENWICK STREET HANCOCK STREET HANCOCK STREET HANCOCK STREET HANCOCK STREET HANCOCK STREET
REY WARRICK STREET WEST LEVES WESTWAY WHITEHALL ROAD WILLIAM STREET REGENT PLACE REGENT STREET RUSSELLS WAY STREET STREET ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

SINCE 1823 THE RUGBY TOWN



SINCE 1823
THE
RUGBY
TOWN



RUGBY
TOWN CENTRE



Promotion

- ~~Promoting council services~~
- Place marketing
- The Rugby Town

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