

SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
7TH NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Councillors: David Sheldon (Chairman), Brian Donnelly (Vice-Chairman) John Chidlow, Philip Circus, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Andrew Dunlop, Jim Goddard, Jim Rae, Kate Rowbottom, David Skipp, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillor: Laurence Deakins, Josh Murphy, Brian O'Connell,

Also present: Councillors: Duncan England, David Holmes, Sue Rogers, Claire Vickers

SO/49 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th September 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/50 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/51 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chairman of the Committee announced that there would be an informal Scrutiny and Overview training session taking place on Thursday 1st December 2011.

The purpose of the session would be to discuss how Scrutiny operated at Horsham District Council, whether the process could be improved and whether there were any training requirements. Members noted that Scrutiny officers from West Sussex County Council and Worthing and Adur District Council would be attending to help facilitate the session.

The Chairman also welcomed the Director of Community Services who would be taking over the role of Scrutiny champion at the Council, following the retirement of the Director of Corporate Resources.

SO/52 **MATTERS CALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 14**

There were no matters called in accordance with Rule 14.

SO/53 **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE USE BY THE EXECUTIVE OR AN OFFICER OF RULE 15 (URGENT POWERS) OR RULE 16 (SPECIAL URGENCY POWERS) OF THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES**

There were no matters called in accordance with Rule 15 or 16.

SO/54 **MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CRIME AND DISORDER UNDER THE POLICE & JUSTICE ACT 2006**

There were no matters in accordance with the crime and disorder under the Police & Justice Act 2006.

SO/55 **ITEMS UNDER COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION**

There were no items under Councillor Call for Action.

SO/56 **BUDGET REVIEW WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13TH OCTOBER 2011**

The Chairman of the Budget Review Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 13th October 2011.

At its meeting the Working Group considered the budget proposals. Members noted that the budget deficit was increasing year on year and other sources of income would need to be identified in order to bridge the gap.

Members noted that, per resident, the Council spent less compared to other local authorities.

The Working Group had also requested that the format in which the budget report was usually presented, be altered, in order to provide Members with a more detailed breakdown of the budget figures to help identify variances.

The Working Group also received the Parking Strategy for Horsham Town Centre, in advance of its presentation to Council. The Group felt that it had not had sufficient time to analyse the information in great detail but noted the proposals.

The Committee noted the update and questioned when the Council could expect to receive information on any funding from central Government, i.e. in relation to maintaining weekly bin collections or retaining low Council Tax. Members stressed that if there was money available then this should be used to maintain the Council’s services for the resident.

The Chairman of the Working Group explained that there was no firm information on subsidies from central Government at this stage, and therefore provisions could not be built into the Council’s budget.

A suggestion had arisen from the Performance Management Working Group to review the weekly waste collection service and charge for the Council’s green waste service, Members expressed some concern and sought reassurance that this would not be reviewed until 2015.

The Chairman of the Budget Review Working Group explained that all elements of the Budget 2012/13 would be considered carefully by the Group.

SO/56 Budget Review Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the Meeting held 13th October 2011 (cont.)

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Budget Review Working Group meeting held 13th October 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/57 **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11TH OCTOBER 2011**

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 11th October 2011.

At the informal planning meeting of the Working Group the new Members had agreed that the Group would address the outstanding issues from the previous Working Group.

At its last meeting the Group considered the lessons learned from the Acorn Plus overspend, focusing mainly on the project management. The Members received the report from the Chief Internal Auditor and details of the establishment of the Project Assurance Core Team and the Tracked Projects List in order to help monitor the Council’s projects in the future.

The Working Group agreed that one of the main problems had been the failure in the initial budgets for the project. However the Working Group was reassured that there was now training in place to ensure effective budgeting across the Council for project management. The Committee felt that it was important that Working Group continue to review this to ensure it was effectively implemented and monitored.

At the meeting the Working Group also received a briefing note on Section 106 and Open Spaces. Members were satisfied that a strategy was being developed to distribute the funding and help identify the needs and opportunities in the District. The Group had requested an early draft of the strategy.

Members noted that the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be different from the S106 procedure. The Council was producing an infrastructure list and once CIL was adopted the list would be fixed subject to the Council’s review every four to five years.

SO/57 Business Improvement Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meeting held 11th October 2011 (cont.)

Members wanted to ensure the parish councils fully understood the new CIL system and pulling together their lists of infrastructure projects for the forthcoming years to submit to the Council. A spreadsheet had previously been circulated but the Head of Planning and Performance would re-circulate the information and communicate with parishes and provide them with some advice on how to complete the lists, the parish clerks would be briefed and some follow up work would take place.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Business Improvement Working Group meeting held 11th October 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/58 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP –CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the meeting held 2nd November 2011; the notes of the meeting would follow.

The Group had had requested the total cost of waste collection and the cost per household in the District, compared to other districts and boroughs in the County.

Arising from discussions at the meeting the Working Group suggested that the Cabinet Member for the Environment consider collecting green waste on a monthly basis through the winter months, when naturally less garden waste was produced, this would help reduce costs to the Council. It was also suggested that the Cabinet Member for the Environment give consideration to charging for the green waste service as from the comparison with neighbouring districts and boroughs, Horsham had the most expensive collection service per property and was the only Council in the County which did not already charge for its green waste collection service.

The Group had received the Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions – Monitoring and Learning report for the quarter. There was some frustration amongst Members at the meeting as there continued to be a delay each quarter in the production of the Operational Services Refuse and Recycling etc. compliment and complaint data, Members agreed that it was important for the Group to be able to review these figures.

The Working Group received the Report on the Use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and suggested that the quarterly

SO/58 Performance Management Working Group – Chairman’s update (cont.)

reports to the Working Group on the use of RIPA be verbal updates, and that a written report be presented only on an annual basis.

Members received the District Plan Priorities and Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 at the meeting, the percentage of planning appeals allowed was discussed and Members requested further details for further analysis.

The Group also suggested that there be a presentation to the Committee on homelessness as there had been a noticeable increase in the figures.

The Committee noted the update, there was some concern regarding the suggestions from the Group to the Cabinet Member for the Environment on the changes to the waste collection service. Members were concerned that making savings here could have a negative effect on 100 percent of residents in the District. However, the Group stressed that this was merely a suggestion for the Cabinet Member to consider in an attempt to make some savings across the Council.

In reference to the presentation on homelessness figures under the Key Performance Indicators, it was agreed that instead of a presentation, the Cabinet Member would be invited to a future meeting of the Committee in order to address the issues and answer questions.

RESOLVED

That an update be given in respect of the Performance Management Working Group

REASON

All Working Group updates are to be received by the Committee.

SO/59 **SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE THE FINAL REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF HORSHAM DISTRICT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 12TH SEPTEMBER AND 6TH OCTOBER 2011**

The Head of Strategic Planning & Performance provided a short presentation for the Committee on the Horsham District Community Partnership (HDCP), its purpose, partners and how it operated.

Members noted that accountability of the HDCP was delivered through this Committee, and reviews were carried out by the Social Inclusion Working Group.

The Chairman of the Social Inclusion Working Group presented the report on the Review of the Horsham District Community Partnership. The Group tried

SO/59 Social Inclusion Working Group – To receive the final report on the Review of Horsham District Community Partnership and notes of the meetings held 12th September and 6th October 2011 (cont.)

to focus on where the HDCP added value and made a contribution to local services.

The strengths of the HDCP had been identified by the Working Group.

A key part of the review was the meeting with the Chairman of the HDCP Board and four of the HDCP Goal Group Chairmen. The Working Group wanted to express its gratitude for the devotion of the Chairman of the HDCP towards the partnership.

Members also wanted to note thanks to the HDCP Chairman and the Goal Group Chairmen for attending the meeting of the Working Group.

The Working Group congratulated the HDCP on its annual conferences and was keen to encourage all district and parish councillors to attend this conference. The date would be circulated to all Members by the Community Planning Manager later this year.

Better publication of the HDCP was recommended. A vast number of people in the community knew little about the Partnership and its value and how it brought together the community. It acted as an umbrella for all community groups in the District. It was suggested that the involvement of representatives of churches in moving forward with the work of the Partnership, such as through Churches Together.

Members noted that the HDCP was the Council's Local Strategic Partnership and was complimentary to the delivery of the District Plan.

The Chairman of the Working Group also presented the notes of the meetings held 12th September and 6th October 2011.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Committee reviews the work of the Horsham District Community Partnership every two years rather than annually, but that an annual meeting be held with the Chairman of the Partnership to review progress against the action plans and to track progress of the recommendations of this review
- (ii) All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee

SO/59 Social Inclusion Working Group – To receive the final report on the Review of Horsham District Community Partnership and notes of the meetings held 12th September and 6th October 2011 (cont.)

RECOMMENDED TO THE HORSHAM DISTRICT
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

That the Partnership:

- (i) Consider the involvement of representatives of local churches and small businesses in taking forward its work as appropriate
- (ii) Engage with Council's Communications Manager in sharpening the Partnership's publicity including better promotion of its annual conference; and encourages all partners to work on maximising publicity
- (iii) Move forward with fewer, sharper objectives.
- (iv) Invite a senior business figure to join the HDCP Board.
- (v) Ask members of the Board to appoint Board deputies so as to ensure consistent representation of all interests at quarterly meetings.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the Council encourage each District Councillor to invite representatives of their local parish councils to Horsham District Community Partnership annual conferences as a first step towards greater engagement of parish councils.

SO/60 PROGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 5TH OCTOBER AND 2ND NOVEMBER 2011

The Chairman of the Progress on Climate Change Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 5th October and 2nd November 2011.

The Committee noted the progress of the Group and it was anticipated that the review would soon be finalised and the report would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 16th January 2012.

The next meeting of the Group would be held on 28th November 2011 when the Group would consider the draft report.

One suggestion arising from the review was to change the name from global warming to make it more constructive and to encourage those who were sceptical about climate change.

SO/60 Progress on Climate Change Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meetings held 5th October and 2nd November 2011 (cont.)

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Progress on Climate Change Working Group meeting held 5th October and 2nd November 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/61 **ACORN PLUS WORKING GROUP - CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 14TH SEPTEMBER AND 3RD OCTOBER 2011**

The Chairman of the Acorn Plus Working Group presented the notes of the meetings held 14th September and 3rd October 2011.

The Committee noted that the Group had agreed new terms of reference for Cabinet Members.

The Group then went on to suggest additional clauses to the terms of reference for Directors at the Council. There was some discussion as to whether this was within the remit of the Working Group, the Group agreed there was a definitive link between the portfolio holder who was responsible for the budget who then transferred the budget with the services to the Director to be produced through the course of the year and therefore this should be reflected in the terms of reference for the Director.

These would be subject to agreement by the Committee when the final report was presented.

The Council’s Solicitor was in the process of reviewing the work by the Group and integrating the terms of reference into the Council’s Constitution for the Group to consider at the next meeting.

The Group also agreed that, although logical, it was outside the remit of the Group to review the role of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. However, as the model councils had already carried out this Solicitor would make observations and report back to the Group.

The Group was also awaiting guidance on the financial roles of the Cabinet Member and Director from the Solicitor, based on the statutory and technical aspects.

The final stage of the review would be to review and analyse all the documents on the Acorn Plus project in order to identify the processes and where the project went wrong.

SO/61 Acorn Plus Working Group - Chairman's update and notes of the meetings held 14th September and 3rd October 2011 (cont.)

The Committee noted the update; Members discussed the responsibility of the Leader in relation to the appointment of the Cabinet Members and their roles.

Once the Group had completed its review it would present the Committee with the final report and the role profile for the Cabinet Member for the Committee to comment and approve.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Acorn Plus Working Group meetings held 14th September and 3rd October 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee

SO/62 **TRAFFIC IN VILLAGES WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 20TH SEPTEMBER 2011**

The Committee received the notes of the meeting held 20th September 2011.

Members noted that there had been active participation from the parish councils during this review.

The objective of the review was to produce a reference guide for parishes to access, consider the options enabling them to make their own informed decisions about suitable traffic calming measures, the range of tools available to them to deal with traffic problems, including costs, benefits and procedures and the technical support they can expect.

The Group would not be providing specific solutions to individual traffic problems.

The Committee noted that the Working Group had received excellent support from West Sussex County Council.

The Working Group also noted the lack of consistency in the speed limits across the District, and had written a letter to the Local Government Association regarding the promotion of national speed limit policy.

It was anticipated that the final report of the Working Group would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 16th January 2011.

SO/62 Traffic in Villages Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meetings held 20th September 2011 (cont.)

The Committee noted that there would be a public consultation in Chichester over plans for a 20 mile an hour restriction following a petition and this may be useful for the review by the Group.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Traffic in Villages Working Group meetings held 20th September 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee

SO/63 **ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 25TH OCTOBER 2011**

The Chairman of the Antisocial Behaviour Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 25th October 2011.

The Working Group learnt that there would be cuts to frontline neighbourhood policing going forward, this would have an impact on antisocial behaviour levels in the District along with the cuts to youth services.

The Group would be looking at community support as a result of the cuts.

The Group was in the process of gathering information from the parish councils on the situation in their areas, and would be looking at the results with data already available from the officers.

Questionnaires had been sent out to all parish councils.

The Committee noted that the little funding that would be available would be directed to places such as Brighton and Crawley where the crime rates were higher.

Chief Inspector Mark Trimmer from the police attended the meeting of the Working Group and was keen to be involved with the review.

The Director of Community Services stressed the importance of tackling antisocial behaviour; supporting vulnerable people and early intervention were recognised as key to prevent antisocial behaviour.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Antisocial Behaviour Working Group meetings held 25th October 2011 be received

SO/63 Antisocial Behaviour Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meetings held 25th October 2011 (cont.)

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee

SO/64 TO RECEIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME

There were no suggestions for the Scrutiny & Overview work programme.

The Chairman encouraged Members to work with the parish councils and community groups for suggestions for the work programme.

SO/65 REPLIES FROM CABINET/COUNCIL REGARDING SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The Committee received an update on the proposed service merger between parking and street scene officers, following the review by the Enforcement Working Group.

The Committee noted that, following three trials, the report detailing the proposed model to combine the services would be presented to Cabinet at its next meeting on 24th November 2011 and if adopted, launched in April 2012. The recommendation to Cabinet would be to retain approximately six Civil Enforcement Officers to retain the parking enforcement functions, along with approximately six Street Scene Wardens.

The Chairman of the Enforcement Working Group was concerned about changes for existing officers and whether the full implications for the staff had been taken into account.

The Director of Development & Environment advised the Committee that staff had already been involved but formal consultation would be carried out following an agreement in principle by Cabinet, this would also require approval by the Personnel Committee.

The Chairman of the Enforcement Working Group would meet with the Director of Development & Environment to discuss this in more detail.

Some Members were concerned that service efficiency would be halved by implementing the new proposals. The Members were keen to compare end result in budget terms once the proposals were put forward.

(b) The Committee received an update on the severe weather equipment requirements following the review by the Severe Weather Working Group.

SO/65 Replies from Cabinet/Council regarding Scrutiny and Overview recommendations (cont.)

The Committee discussed the central equipment store which was proposed for the town centre and Members were concerned about the smaller surrounding villages, Members wanted reassurance severe weather plan contained details of local volunteers i.e. farmers and local contractors and people with equipment to clear the snow quickly and how the severe weather plan would be triggered.

The Emergency Planning Officer would be asked to email the Chairman of the Severe Weather Working Group with details of the severe weather plan.

The Committee also sought reassurance that the actions would be addressed before the winter, for that the example the equipment store was ready and that funding for snow plough attachment was addressed.

(c) The Committee received an update on the progress made following the recommendations arising from the Flooding & Drainage Working Group which were agreed by Cabinet in September 2010.

A Member of the former Working Group was pleased to see the progress that had been made and that the recommendations had come to fruition.

The meeting finished at 8.10pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

CHAIRMAN