

**SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2013**

Present: Councillors: George Cockman (Chairman), Philip Circus, Leonard Crosbie, Duncan England, Jim Goddard, Brian O'Connell, Kate Rowbottom, David Sheldon, David Skipp, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors: John Chidlow, Laurence Deakins, Brian Donnelly, Josh Murphy, Jim Rae

Also present: Councillor Claire Vickers

Officer: Katherine Eberhart, Director of Corporate Resources

SO/69 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/70 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/71 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There were no announcements.

SO/72 **TO RECEIVE ANY REPLIES FROM CABINET/COUNCIL REGARDING SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no replies to report.

SO/73 **ISSUES OF SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP**

The Chairman raised an issue arising from the practice of Cabinet Members appointing deputies to work alongside them. Some deputies were also Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its working groups. The Monitoring Officer and Principal Solicitor's advice to the Chairman was tabled. It stated that the Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules did not refer to Deputy Cabinet Members and that their posts were unofficial and not an approved position within the Council's Constitution. The rules provided that no Member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they had been involved.

SO/73 Issues of Scrutiny Membership (continued)

Members did not feel that deputies should be prevented from participation in scrutiny and overview matters and their role would, in any case, not prevent participation in an overview of service delivery. Members' expectation was that any potential conflict of interest would be declared by deputies if the situation arose. The Committee agreed not to take or seek any further action.

SO/74 **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013.

The Working Group had agreed the terms of reference for its review of Development Management.

The Working Group had reviewed the S106 grant process and would receive further information at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

The Working Group had completed its review of the Council's process for vehicle procurement; the Head of Operational Services had attended the meeting and provided further information. The Working Group was impressed with the vehicle procurement, repair and replacement and its Chairman would write to Operational Services staff to highlight those successes and the positive impact that had on resources.

The Working Group had approved further revisions to the Council's Corporate Policy and Procedures Document on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and agreed that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee be asked to recommend that the Council adopt the revisions.

The Chairman of the Working Group had reported on his attendance at the Business Transformation Advisory Group meeting. He would be reporting back on the Advisory Group's planned visit to Eastbourne Borough Council to learn about its experience of transformation and restructuring.

The Committee, at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013, had not addressed two recommendations in the progress report of the Working Group. The first was a suggestion that the implementation of the Council's revised policy for the use of consultants should be reviewed and monitored. The Committee agreed that the Working Group should undertake that task commencing in September 2013 to allow for a sufficient period of time to elapse to enable a productive review. The second was a request for the Committee to decide whether and how the Business Improvement Working Group might consider proposed improvements and changes to services arising from the Business Transformation Programme. The Chairman of the Working Group agreed to continue attending and reporting back on the meetings of the Business Transformation Advisory Group meetings as the means of reviewing progress.

SO/74 Business Improvement Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman (continued)

RESOLVED

- (1) That the notes of the Business Improvement Working Group meeting, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, be received
- (2) To instruct the Business Improvement Working Group to commence a review in September 2013 of the Council's revised policy for the use of consultants

REASON

- (1) All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee
- (2) To fulfil the Committee's scrutiny function by authorising the Working Group to review specific Council services

SO/75 **CRIME AND DISORDER WORKING GROUP - TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

The production of the draft Community Safety Partnership Plan had been delayed to allow time for CSP partners to submit information and it would be presented to the CSP Board meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013 for approval. The Chairman of the Working Group stated that the CSP Board meeting would be asked to discuss whether there might be a reduction of policing resources in certain areas in Horsham District; that discussion would be reported to the Working Group meeting to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Committee Members suggested that such issues could be raised with the Police and Crime Commissioner, and queried the method and accuracy of recording crime and the use of community resolution arrangements. The Committee also suggested that the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group might be an appropriate forum to scrutinise policing issues on a county-wide basis. The Committee agreed to request the Community Safety Manager to attend its next meeting to discuss these matters.

The Working Group had invited an officer from the Planning and Environmental Services Department to attend its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013 to discuss the procedure for obtaining comments about promoting crime and disorder reduction in relation to planning applications.

SO/75 Crime and Disorder Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman (continued)

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Crime and Disorder Working Group meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be received

REASON

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

SO/76 **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP - TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Finance and Performance Working Group meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 presented the notes of that meeting.

The Working Group had noted that the Council had received an additional £15,195 as a New Homes Bonus Adjustment Grant for 2013/14.

The Working Group had heard from the Head of Operational Services about the procurement of fuel for the Council's fleet of vehicles via the largest energy buying consortium in the south of England, and about the purchase of a new secure fuel storage tank following a fuel theft at Hop Oast Depot in late 2012. The Working Group had emphasised the need for continued accurate monitoring of fuel usage. The Head of Operational Services would attend a future Working Group meeting to discuss the members' queries about the transport services budget for repairs and maintenance which was higher than expected.

The Working Group had received the minutes of the CenSus Joint Committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013. Members had expressed concern at an ICT failure at Worthing Borough Council and noted the work being undertaken in response.

The Working Group had been concerned about the increased level of missed public telephone calls to the CenSus Partnership which coincided with an increased volume of calls due to changes in benefit claimant circumstances and the issuing of Council Tax bills. Additional staff members were being employed and some existing staff members transferred to deal with the telephone enquiries. The Working Group had suggested that timely preparations and adequate staffing levels be in place for the same time next year.

SO/76 Finance and Performance Working Group - to receive an update from the Chairman (continued)

Committee Members queried the delays in answering calls to the CenSus Partnership. The Director of Corporate Resources reported that the Chief Executive had raised this issue with Mid Sussex District Council and had been reassured that additional staff members were being deployed to answer the calls.

The Working Group had received an informative presentation which had compared the Council's costs for a range of services against 46 local authorities in southern England. In general, Horsham District Council services were provided at a relatively low cost although Development Management and waste collection costs were slightly above average; the latter costs would be decrease in future because of the introduction of a charge for garden waste collection.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Finance and Performance Working Group meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 be received

REASON

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

SO/77 **SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The former Chairman of the Social Inclusion Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The Chairman congratulated Councillor Vickers on her appointment as the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities and thanked her for her contribution to the Working Group.

The Working Group had commenced its review of Poverty Amongst an Ageing Population and the Chief Executive of Age UK Horsham District Council had attended its meeting to outline its work and Strategic Plan. The review would consider a broader definition of poverty, extending beyond that of financial hardship, to examine social isolation and access to services.

The Working Group would invite a representative of the Senior Persons' Council to attend a future meeting to discuss what older people themselves had indicated that they needed in terms of services and support.

SO/77 Social Inclusion Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman (continued)

The Working Group considered a proposal for a Horsham Town Access Audit, with input from the Interim Equalities Officer, to examine physical access and also access to information and services.

Progress needed to be made on the recommendations relating to the Information Shop for Young People, preferably as soon as possible to ensure the participation of the students who had conducted the research and provided their findings.

The review of Southern Water's metering programme had been completed and the review of the Council's representations on external organisations was nearing completion.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be received

REASON

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

SO/78 **HEALTH PROVISION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Health Provision Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March and referred to the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

The Working Group had noted the information it had received from the local CCG and NHS trusts and health providers about services provided at Horsham Hospital.

The Head of Adult Services at Sussex Community NHS Trust (SCT), and the Matron of the Horizon Unit at Horsham Hospital had attended the Working Group meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013. It had been a very positive and informative meeting.

The majority of health services at Horsham Hospital were provided by SCT. The Working Group was informed that property and buildings at Horsham Hospital, since 1 April 2013, were owned and managed by PropCo. There was not a hospital manager or administrator but Heads of Department did meet to discuss matters of common interest.

SO/78 Health Provision Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman (continued)

SCT had suggested that mental health was an area where additional resources would be welcome to provide care and support for those patients who had a degree of dementia and SCT recognised the benefits that could be derived from better access to a psychiatrist who could make a diagnosis in relation to patients with dementia. Greater integration of health and social care would provide benefits and Horsham Hospital would be the hub for many of those support services.

SCT would consider extending the Minor Injuries Unit's opening hours on weekdays until 7:00 p.m. and also consider the case and cost for opening it at weekends.

The Working Group would invite the local Clinical Commissioning Group representatives to attend its next meeting to discuss their vision and strategy for Horsham Hospital.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Health Provision Working Group meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be received

REASON

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

SO/79 **SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee approved the Annual Report 2012/13 subject to the deletion of the section which referred to Deputy Cabinet Members. The Chairman had raised this as a possible future issue for Scrutiny but a majority of Members did not favour its inclusion in the annual report. It had not been previously discussed by the Committee.

The Annual Report would be published on the Council's website and the relevant link would be circulated to the parish and neighbourhood councils.

The Working Group suggested that the Chairman write to the Leader of the Council to seek clarification about the role of Deputy Cabinet Members.

SO/80 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000: REVISED CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Committee noted the revisions to the RIPA Corporate Policy and Procedures Document. The revisions were required in order to comply with a number of legislative changes and in particular the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 which restricted local authorities' use of RIPA.

SO/80 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Revised Corporate Policy and Procedures (continued)

The new changes meant that internal RIPA authorisation would not take effect until judicial approval (via an application to the Magistrates' Court) was obtained for directed surveillance, covert Human Intelligence sources, and communications data. Use of RIPA to authorise directed surveillance (covert surveillance on individuals in public places) should be confined to cases where the offence under investigation carried a maximum custodial sentence of six months or more.

The Committee agreed to the following recommendation to the Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To adopt the revised RIPA Corporate Policy and Procedures Document in order to comply with the legislative changes to RIPA.

SO/81 **TO RECEIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee agreed to consider adding to its work programme a scrutiny of the method and accuracy of recording crime.

SO/82 **WEST SUSSEX JOINT SCRUTINY**

West Sussex County Council had agreed that the trial joint scrutiny arrangements would be a permanent arrangement and had agreed a revised protocol. For 2013-14 the intention was to conduct a joint scrutiny review of the multi-agency involvement and control of major flooding incidents across West Sussex. Horsham District Council was committed to participating in the joint scrutiny work and the Committee expressed its support.

The Chairman agreed to raise the issue of policing resources and the method of recording crime at the Joint Scrutiny Steering Group because comments on a county-wide basis might have greater impact when discussing these matters with Sussex Police.

The Chairman agreed to write to the Chairman of the WSCC Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee to ask that committee to enquire about how GP surgeries were managed and whether there had been any decrease in health provision in recent years and whether the employment of some part-time GPs had an impact.

SO/83 **ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT CONSIDERED URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting finished at 7.00 p.m. having commenced at 5.30 p.m.  
CHAIRMAN