

SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

12TH JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillors: George Cockman (Chairman), John Chidlow, Philip Circus, Roger Clarke, David Coldwell, Leonard Crosbie, Brian Donnelly, Duncan England, Brian O'Connell, Kate Rowbottom, David Sheldon, David Skipp, Diana van der Klugt, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillor Laurence Deakins

Also present: Councillor Roy Cornell

Officer: Katharine Eberhart, Director of Corporate Resources

SO/54 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th November 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/55 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/56 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There were no announcements.

SO/57 **REPLIES FROM CABINET/COUNCIL REGARDING SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no replies to report.

SO/58 **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP - TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2014, AND TO RECEIVE THE FINAL REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF HDC'S FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY**

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 25th November 2014 and the final report on the review of HDC's Five Year Housing Land Supply.

The Committee noted the reasons why the Council had not, for a number of years, met the housing targets set. The evidence showed that the Council had granted a significant number of planning permissions but the number of houses actually completed by developers had fallen short of the requirement as a result of the economic downturn. The Horsham District Planning Framework should provide an adequate housing supply for the next twenty years; the HDPF Housing Trajectory 2011-2031 illustrated that.

SO/58 Business Improvement Working Group - to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meeting held on 25th November 2014, and to receive the Final Report on the review of HDC's Five Year Housing Land Supply (continued)

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group referred to the interim letter from the Planning Inspector appointed by the Government to examine the Horsham District Planning Framework, following the hearings held between 4th and 19th November 2014, into the soundness of the HDPF. It stated that "given the existing housing commitments and large new sites now coming on stream, I expect that the Council would be able to show that it has a five year supply of housing against a revised minimum target of 750 p.a."

The Committee welcomed the findings of the review and recognised that the current situation could arise again if there was another significant economic downturn.

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group stated that there were informal discussions within government and also with the local MPs about reducing the time limit during which permitted development must be commenced, from three years to a shorter timeframe.

Members discussed the tension between the Government's localism ambitions and its drive to achieve increased housing provision. The Chairman agreed, with the assistance of the Working Group Members who had spoken on this matter, to draft a letter to the local MPs to initiate a discussion.

RESOLVED

That the final report and the notes of the Business Improvement Working Group meeting, held on 25th November 2014, be received.

REASON

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

SO/59 **CRIME AND DISORDER WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER 2014**

The Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 15th December 2014. Chief Inspector Howard Hodges, Sussex Police, and Emily King, WSCC Better Communities Manager had attended that meeting along with the Community Safety Manager and Community Safety Officer. The Working Group had reviewed the performance of the Action Plans 2013/14 and also the Action Plans, to date, for 2014/15 of the Horsham District Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

SO/59 Crime and Disorder Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meeting held on 15th December 2014 (continued)

The Chief Inspector had stated that the Sussex Police Target Operating Model (TOM) was being prepared to consider the shape of policing over the next five years. The report would be available in January 2015; the Committee supported the Working Group's intention to consider the proposals in the TOM report.

The Working Group had been concerned that the action plan to reduce the level of risk to repeat and vulnerable victims was no longer a formal action plan in 2014/15. The Better Communities Manager had assured the Working Group that this remained a priority.

The CSP website was being upgraded and would be demonstrated at the next Working Group meeting.

The Working Group had noted the new action plan for 2104/15 to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol to individuals, families and communities; HDC would be the lead partner in 2014/15.

The Committee and the Working Group had previously discussed Police Community Support Officers' (PCSOs) workloads and the impact of the recent reorganisation. The Chairman of the Committee had suggested that two PCSOs, representing the rural and urban areas, be invited to attend a Committee meeting but it had since been decided that was not the best method to gather information. The Chief Inspector had explained to the Working Group that there was a recruitment freeze until March 2016, how some local PCSOs had become police constables and found new employment outside of the District which had resulted in an adjustment of the remaining PCSOs' work and allocation to areas where the need was greatest. Committee Members agreed with the Working Group's suggestion that the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to attend a meeting with HDC Councillors.

The Working Group had discussed the value and benefit of Neighbourhood Wardens. The Committee requested the Working Group to gather information about the role, numbers and the costs of Neighbourhood Wardens, relevant parish voluntary groups (such as the Billingshurst pastors), and Local Action Teams to support crime prevention and community reassurance in the parishes.

The Chief Inspector had informed the Working Group of the significant increase in reported violence against the person in Horsham and West Sussex; he felt that reflected an improved integrity in the recording of crime figures. Committee Members queried that interpretation and suggested a more in depth consideration of such statistics.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Crime and Disorder Working Group meeting, held on 15th December 2014, be received.

SO/59 Crime and Disorder Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meeting held on 15th December 2014 (continued)

REASON

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

RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER DISTRICT:

That an invitation be sent to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a meeting with HDC Councillors to discuss policing, budgets, resources, PCSOs, and the recording and interpretation of crime figures, and any other relevant issues.

SO/60 **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 19TH NOVEMBER AND 3RD DECEMBER 2014**

The Chairman of the Finance and Performance Working Group presented the notes of the meetings held on 19th November and 3rd December 2014.

The Working Group had noted the increase in Freedom of Information requests received by the Council and how requests could also be made for environmental information held by the council under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Working Group had noted that the forecast outturn for the year to 31st March 2015 was estimated to underspend the approved revenue budget by £395K. The capital projects actual spend from April to September 2014 was £2.6M which was 22% of the annual budget; an underspend for the year of £4.5M was anticipated and that would be moved across to 2015/16; the remaining budgets for two major projects, the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre new build and the redevelopment of Hop Oast Depot would be carried forward to 2015/16.

Sub groups would review the budget, staffing and performance of certain of the Council's key areas of activities in relation to parking and operational services.

The Working Group noted that, as at 30th September 2014, 485 households were on the housing waiting list. Committee Members suggested that the Working Group continue to monitor that and to request an interpretation of the numbers following the changes to the terminology and how that figure was recorded.

SO/60 Finance and Performance Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meetings held on 19th November and 3rd December 2014 (continued)

The Working Group had received an update on CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) and wished to review the CIL framework and S106 processes. The Director of Resources stated that the Director of Planning was preparing a role description for the post of a Section 106 Officer.

The Working Group had received information about the budget process for 2015/16; the budget report would be considered at the Cabinet meeting to be held on 29th January 2015.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Finance and Performance Working Group meetings, held on 19th November and 3rd December 2014, be received.

REASON

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

SO/61 **SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1st DECEMBER 2014**

The Chairman of the Social Inclusion Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 1st December 2014.

The Working Group had agreed to undertake a review of the effectiveness of provision for local residents who are financial hardship. Representatives from relevant organisations would be invited to attend Working Group meetings to provide evidence and share information.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meeting, held on 1st December 2014, be received.

REASON

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

SO/62 **SOUTHERN RAIL'S PERFORMANCE IN SEVERE WEATHER WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Southern Rail's Performance in Severe Weather Working Group presented the tabled proposed terms of reference to expand the remit beyond performance in severe weather by establishing a Rail Network Performance Working Group to consider the general performance and resilience of the rail network and services.

Committee Members suggested additional terms of reference to include enquiries about the future use of the sidings and potential site development at Horsham station, and also to consider the provision for car parking at railway stations, and enquire about what land adjacent to railways was owned by Southern Rail and Network Rail which might be used for that purpose.

The Chairman of the Working Group stated that he had been informed by Network Rail of its plans to upgrade the Horsham station sidings to establish a maintenance depot; Multi Purpose Vehicles which were used to apply de-icer and scrape ice from the conductor rail were already located there.

The Committee agreed that the new Working Group should comprise the members of the Southern Rail's Performance in Severe Weather Working Group and an additional three Members. The Chairman of the Working Group suggested that it meet at least twice a year.

RESOLVED

To approve the terms of reference, incorporating the suggested additional terms, to establish a Rail Network Performance Working Group

SO/63 **HEALTH PROVISION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH OCTOBER 2014**

The Chairman of the Health Provision Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 30th October 2014. The Cabinet Member for a Safer and Healthier District and the Head of Community and Culture had attended that meeting.

The Working Group had noted the preparation of a draft HDC response to the Clinical Commissioning Group's Strategic Service Development Plan. The SSDP did reflect the CCG's discussions with the Council about developing services at Horsham Hospital.

The Working Group would be reviewing the provision of outpatient services and also the local care home provision for care pathways for those patients who had been in a general hospital, in particular for those who had experienced strokes and required neuro rehabilitation care.

SO/63 Health Provision Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meeting held on 30th October 2014 (continued)

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Health Provision Working Group meeting held on 30th October 2014 be received.

REASON

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

SO/64 **INDUCTION OF NEWLY-ELECTED COUNCILLORS WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER 2014**

The Chairman of the Induction of newly-elected Councillors Working Group presented the tabled notes of the meeting held on 18th December 2014. He felt that the induction programme used in 2011 remained a sound basis for the programme to be provided in 2015.

The Working Group had noted the comments about Member induction and training which had been provided in the responses to the Members' Survey conducted by Democratic Services. The Working Group agreed that there should be training for Councillors on the use of iPads and that certain key documentation should be pre-loaded on to their iPads.

The Working Group had suggested officer and Member mentors for newly-elected Councillors. Relevant documents published by the Local Government Association would also be recommended.

The Chairman of the Committee suggested that the Group Leaders be briefed about the induction programme. He felt that new Councillors gained valuable experience through membership of working groups and he suggested that new Councillors be asked to provide details of their experience and skills and also indicate which areas of Council business they would like to participate in. That would assist Group Leaders to nominate new Members to relevant working and advisory groups.

The Working Group would present its Final Report to the Committee meeting on 16th March 2015.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Induction of newly-elected Councillors Working Group meeting held on 18th December 2014 be received.

REASON

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

SO/65 **TRADE WASTE WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

There had been no further meetings of the Trade Waste Working Group. It would next meet on 23rd February 2015 to consider whether its recommendations had been progressed and implemented.

RESOLVED

To note the update given in respect of the Trade Waste Working Group.

REASON

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

SO/66 **JOINT SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP FOR THE COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE CONTRACT - UPDATE**

The Committee noted that, in relation to the contract for generalist legal advice to the public, the Cabinet, on 20th November 2014, had agreed that the advisory service be procured jointly with West Sussex County Council and the other six West Sussex District and Borough Councils. The contract was to be offered to the consortium of West Sussex Citizen Advice Bureaux for a period of five years, with an option to extend the contract on the same terms for a further five year period.

SO/67 **JOINT SCRUTINY STEERING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman reported that the meeting of the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group, scheduled for December 2014, had been cancelled. A meeting was being arranged for Spring 2015.

SO/68 **TO RECEIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME**

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

SO/69 **ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT CONSIDERED URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting finished at 7.35 p.m. having commenced at 5.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN