

**SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 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, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors Laurence Deakins, Diana van der Klugt

Officers: Katharine Eberhart, Director of Corporate Resources  
Neil Worth, Community Safety Officer

SO/70 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/71 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/72 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There were no announcements.

SO/73 **REPLIES FROM CABINET/COUNCIL REGARDING SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Chairman reported that the Cabinet Member for a Safer and Healthier District had responded to the Committee's recommendation that an invitation be sent to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a meeting with HDC Councillors to discuss policing, budgets, resources, Police Community Support Officers, the recording and interpretation of crime figures, and any other relevant issues. The Cabinet Member supported an invitation being sent and suggested that the Commissioner be invited to attend a meeting prior to the Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

SO/74 **REVIEW OF HORSHAM TOWN DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDER**

The Committee noted the report which referred to the Council's approval of a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) which took effect in January 2014 and gave powers to police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to be used to tackle anti-social behaviour and problems associated with nuisance drinking of alcohol in public. There had been a significant reduction in the number of complaints about that nuisance made to the Police in 2014 because of their effective use of the powers to seize alcohol and take enforcement action. The DPPO would continue but the Home Office had proposed that the Order be reviewed by Scrutiny and Overview Committees every two years following the initial review.

SO/74 Review of Horsham Town Designated Public Place Order (continued)

The Committee noted the positive impact of the DPPO and agreed to establish a two year cycle of reviews. The Community Safety Officer explained that the Order would later change its title to a 'Public Space Protection Order' following the implementation of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Members discussed the news about proposals in the new Local Sussex Policing Model which would make significant changes over the next five years to local policing, with fewer officers; 500 police officers, 200 staff, and 300 other posts elsewhere in the force would go as the service sought to save £56 million by 2020. Members expressed their concerns about the impact of fewer police officers and commented that effective policing required adequate resourcing. Members felt that the focusing of policing on areas where crime was highest might impact on Horsham District which had invested resources to tackle and lower crime but that good work might now be undone.

The Committee agreed to express those views when the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner attended a meeting with Councillors in June 2015 and requested further data about police numbers and resources to inform Councillors in advance of that meeting.

The Chairman agreed to speak to the Cabinet Member for a Safer and Healthier District to convey the Committee's concerns about policing levels and the potential adverse impact on crime and disorder. Those views would also be reported to the Crime and Disorder Working Group.

**RESOLVED**

To establish a two year cycle of reviews of the Horsham Town Designated Public Place Order / Public Space Protection Order, with the next review to be undertaken in January 2017.

**REASON**

To ensure the continuing relevance of the Order in line with Home Office guidance.

SO/75

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP - TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY AND 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015, AND PERFORMANCE GRAPHS FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AT THE END OF QUARTER 3, 2014/15, AND TO RECEIVE THE FINAL REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES OF THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT TEAM**

The Chairman of the Business Improvement Working Group presented the notes of the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the performance graphs for Development Management, and the final report on the review of the Planning Enforcement team's procedures and processes.

The Working Group's review of property and asset management was ongoing. The Property and Facilities Manager had attended the Working Group meeting in March 2015, had subsequently presented a proposed restructure of his department to the Personnel Committee which had approved it, and he would update the Working Group at its meeting in July 2015.

The performance graphs for Development Management showed that the percentage of major applications determined had dropped slightly in Quarter 3, 2014/15 and that was being monitored.

The Chairman of the Working Group presented the Final Report on the review of the operational procedures and processes of the Planning Enforcement team. The Working Group had concluded that the Enforcement Team was functioning well, that many of the complaints received were from applicants disappointed with a decision or arose from neighbour disputes. The Working Group felt that the Council's enforcement work should rely on the professional officers' decisions about whether to investigate and take action rather than a zero tolerance stance.

The Working Group welcomed the clear and well written Enforcement Policy which was posted on the Council's website and had been sent to local parish councils; that would help to clarify how the Council's enforcement policy worked. The Working Group welcomed the assurance from the Director of Planning, Economic Development and Property, that the Enforcement Team would advise local Members when enforcement action was to be taken, and that communication with Members on planning matters generally would be discussed at the new Development Management Advisory Group.

Members discussed the reference to the savings achieved by the Business Transformation Programme which had been reported to the Working Group meeting in January 2015. The Director of Corporate Resources explained that £440K had been saved to date with a further £100K in the pipeline, and that a target had been set to achieve £1 million savings by 2017/18, making an overall target of £1.54M which was higher than the £1.25 target set in 2012. The focus now would be on how the Council commissioned its services and sought value for money.

SO/75 Business Improvement Working Group - to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015, and performance graphs for Development Management at the end of Quarter 3, 2014/15, and to receive the Final Report on the review of the procedures and processes of the Planning Enforcement team (continued)

The Working Group's review of the background to the Council's lack of a Five Year Housing Land Supply had been completed and reported to the Committee in January 2015.

The Committee agreed to the Working Group's request that the Business Improvement Working Group continue to monitor the performance of Development Management.

The Working Group had discussed the financial impact of the overturn of officer recommendations in planning application decisions and the costs incurred in all the planning appeals for 2013/14. The Chairman of the Working Group reported the legal and counsel fees, and a significant cost awarded against the Council in relation to one appeal although that was subject to ongoing negotiations, and mentioned potential costs of other planning appeals. He suggested a discussion about this matter should occur in the new Council year. The Committee agreed that planning appeal costs should be monitored in future by the Finance and Performance Working Group. The Chairman of the Finance and Performance Working Group agreed and stated that the final costs at the year-end would be examined.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the Members of the Business Improvement Working Group for their exemplary work.

RESOLVED

That the Final Report and the notes of the Business Improvement Working Group meetings, held on 27<sup>th</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015, be received.

REASON

Final Reports and all notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/76 **CRIME AND DISORDER WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

There had been no further meetings of the Crime and Disorder Working Group. It would next meet on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

RESOLVED

To note the update given in respect of the Crime and Disorder Working Group.

SO/76 Crime and Disorder Working Group – To receive an update from the Chairman (cont)

REASON

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

SO/77 **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**

The Chairman of the Finance and Performance Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

The Working Group had received the details of the complaints and compliments received by the Council for Quarter 3, 2014/15. The Council's complaints procedure was being reduced from a three to a two stage process, and with more time to investigate to enable robust responses to be provided.

.In response to a question regarding complaints regarding CenSus Revenues and Benefits telephone answering response rates, the Director of Corporate Resources clarified that the complaints for Q3 related to a former telephone system; a new system had recently been implemented for Benefits which was proving successful. There was a separate issue affecting the telephone system for the CenSus Council Tax team but a solution would soon be implemented

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage and Leisure had attended the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February. The Working Group had requested data to be included in future reports detailing the reasons for complaints received by the District's leisure centres. The Cabinet Member agreed to forward feedback from the leisure centre advisory groups and information provided by Places for People.

The key performance indicators for Quarter 3, 2014/15 showed 61% on target and 23% close to target and 16% outside the target.

The Working Group praised the work of Jeremy Knight, Museum and Heritage Officer, and suggested that he be thanked for the high attendance figures for visitors to the museum and for his organisation of interesting exhibitions. The Chairman of the Committee agreed that he would write to Mr Knight.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the Members of the Finance and Working Group, and especially the Chairman, for their diligent work.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Finance and Performance Working Group meeting, held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015, be received.

REASON

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

SO/78

**SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE  
FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON  
9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY AND 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**

The Chairman of the Social Inclusion Working Group presented the notes of the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

The Working Group had completed the evidence gathering for its review of the effectiveness of provision for local residents who are financial hardship. Representatives from relevant organisations and agencies had attended the Working Group meetings to participate and share information.

The Working Group had noted that there was an increasing need for support and services for those in financial crisis. The Working Group was told by the review participants that delays in the benefit assessment process and penalties were significant reasons for why people slipped into crisis. The representatives of local organisations mentioned the difficulties they had experienced in telephoning the CenSus Revenues and Benefits service on behalf of clients and it was suggested that CenSus be asked to provide direct telephone numbers for those agencies to bypass the general switchboard.

The Working Group suggested re-establishing the Horsham District Community Partnership, and noted that local organisations would benefit from more volunteers and discussed whether the Council could help to source volunteers or encourage its employees to consider volunteering.

The Committee approved the recommendations of the review subject to amendments requesting a follow-up report later in 2015 about the CenSus benefits processing service and its telephone answering performance, and for the proposed 'surgery' at the Council's new office to provide easy access and ensure people could ask for face to face advice with anonymity if they wished.

**RESOLVED**

That the notes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meetings, held on 9<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015, be received.

**REASON**

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

SO/78 Social Inclusion Working Group – To receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (cont.)

RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER DISTRICT

- (1) to review the impact of the decision to disband the Horsham District Community Partnership and consider its reinstatement, or otherwise request the Council to host a forum once or twice a year, to facilitate the meeting of Council Members and officers with local organisations / agencies, councils and churches to discuss community issues of common interest (which could build on the example of the Council's *'Our Future Together'* Partnership Conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015);
- (2) that the Health & Wellbeing web pages be updated to include more information about debt and money advice services, relevant local organisations and agencies; and also request the Communications team to publicise that information to staff on the intranet with a link to the relevant web pages; and request the Health & Wellbeing service to consider providing courses on financial management skills;
- (3) to request that the Autumn edition of the Horsham District News magazine include a feature article detailing those organisations which provide advice and assistance to local residents who are in financial hardship, and later collate that information to include within a leaflet to be distributed widely across the District;
- (4) request that a room be made available in the Council offices in Parkside, Horsham for a regular 'surgery' which could be publicised to allow local residents who are in financial hardship/crisis and in need of advice to meet relevant volunteers and/or Council staff; and ensure easy access and for people to be able to ask for face to face advice in anonymity if they wished; and
- (5) request West Sussex County Council to promote financial management by inviting relevant agencies to visit District schools to speak on the topic as part of PSHE lessons (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education).

SO/78 Social Inclusion Working Group – To receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (cont.)

RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR  
FINANCE

- (1) to request the Finance and Performance Working Group to continue to monitor the performance data for the CenSus Revenues and Benefits service, in particular the speed of processing benefit claims and the speed of processing information on the changed circumstances of individual benefit applicants, to check that the target times were not exceeded and that performance was improving from the current position; and for a follow-up report to be provided later in 2015; and
- (2) to enquire about the performance of the CenSus telephone contact service and to propose that key organisations / agencies be provided with direct telephone contact numbers to circumvent the reported difficulties in contacting CenSus via the general public telephone number; and for a follow-up report to be provided later in 2015.

RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR  
COMMUNICATION, SPECIAL PROJECTS AND  
HORSHAM TOWN

- (1) to consider how the Business Transformation Programme's provision of more Council communications and services to the public via online transactions might adversely impact on local residents who do not have internet access or might not have the ability or available support to communicate by that method; and to consider the preparation of a digital inclusion policy and to map the public access to internet use and support which was available across the District.

SO/79 HEALTH PROVISION WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015

The Chairman of the Health Provision Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

The Working Group had discussed the need for the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to decide on a plan for the relocation and rationalisation of health surgeries. The Chairman of the Working Group highlighted concerns about the lack of firm proposals for future health care provision for Broadbridge Heath and development North of Horsham.

SO/79 Health Provision Working Group – to receive an update from the Chairman and notes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (continued)

The Chairman of the Committee agreed to send a letter, drafted by the Chairman of the Working Group, to NHS England Surrey and Sussex and the local CCG requesting action on the apparent lack of a strategy.

The Working Group suggested that the Council should, be proactive in the provision of premises for health surgeries and given that pressures would arise with the development North of Horsham. The Director of Corporate Resources informed Members that the Director of Community Services and the Head of Community and Culture were working with the local CCGs to provide a solution for health provision at Broadbridge Heath and to consider health provision in other District areas.

The Chairman of the Committee agreed to the Working Group's request to write to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to urge relevant parties such as local GPs, NHS England, CCG and developers, to resolve the issue of health care provision for Horsham and Broadbridge Heath residents.

The Committee approved the Working Group's request to undertake a review of the local care provision in the District for those patients who had experienced a stroke and who required neuro rehabilitation care.

The Chairman of the Working Group reported the improvements achieved at East Surrey Hospital. The only aspect that needed attention was its out-patients/appointments service; the Working Group would monitor improvements to that service. The Working Group had been encouraged by proposals for expanding health services at Horsham Hospital and would continue to monitor progress and enquire about the long-term strategy for a possible health campus at Horsham Hospital / Hurst Road. The Working Group would continue to ask about whether a hospital manager would be employed and request that parking difficulties at the hospital be addressed.

**RESOLVED**

That the notes of the Health Provision Working Group meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 be received.

**REASON**

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

SO/80 **INDUCTION OF NEWLY-ELECTED COUNCILLORS WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015 AND TO RECEIVE THE FINAL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP**

The Chairman of the Induction of newly-elected Councillors Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

The Working Group had welcomed the political Group Leaders' support for the idea of Member mentors. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had expressed support for the Working Group's suggestions. Officer mentors would also be selected and asked to meet their relevant Councillor at least once a month for a period of six months after the May 2015 elections.

The Working Group was suggesting a timetable for the induction process which would avoid too much being delivered to soon, with priority training in key subjects such as planning law and other training in subsequent months.

The Chairman of the Working Group presented the Final Report.

The Committee approved the recommendations which set out a proposed induction programme, provided for Members and officer mentors to be selected and trained to support newly-elected Councillors, to ask the new Councillors about their personal skills and the areas of Council activity they might wish to participate in, and to request that training sessions be filmed to form part of a training toolkit for Councillors. The Committee noted that the Director of Community Services would ensure progress on this matter.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) To receive the Final Report and approve its recommendations; and
- (2) That the notes of the Induction of newly-elected Councillors Working Group meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 be received.

**REASON**

All Final Reports and all notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

S0/81 **TRADE WASTE WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE  
FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**

The Chairman of the Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015.

The Waste and Recycling Manager had attended the meeting and reported that some progress on implementing the Working Group's recommendations had initially been slower than anticipated. An Administration Team Leader had been recruited and a new post was being recruited for the Communications team to deal with waste, recycling and litter marketing and communications. Promotional work for the trade waste service would commence in April/ May 2015 with an initial focus on businesses located at trading estates in Crawley.

The Chairman of the Working Group had written to the relevant West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member to seek clarification about progress on the delayed Mechanical Biological Treatment waste plant becoming operational.

The Working Group felt that the trade waste service was doing reasonably well with a stable customer base. A further meeting would be arranged for mid-October 2015 to examine progress, the impact of the marketing campaign, and to receive an update on the WSCC waste treatment plant.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Trade Waste Working Group meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 be received.

REASON

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

S0/82 **FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION TO THE SCRUTINY TRAINING PROVIDED ON  
30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014**

The Committee felt that the training session held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, '*Building on good practice: developing Scrutiny and Overview to get the best value and outcomes*', had been excellent.

Members requested a training session to be arranged in 2015/16 and suggested that such training be added to the Committee's work programme as a regular activity. The Committee noted the useful publications issued by the Centre for Public Scrutiny including about one about effective scrutiny committee meetings.

SO/83 **WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 AND PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEWS FOR 2015/16**

The Committee noted the work which it had completed in 2014/15, and agreed that the following reviews, not yet commenced, be undertaken in 2015/16 along with further scrutiny training:

- The Council's Heritage strategy
- Car parking provision in new developments
- The funding shortage for infrastructure west of Horsham
- Cabinet system versus the Committee system
- The Council's Communications Policy
- Follow up on the office move
- Follow up on the impact of planning appeals
- Monitor the performance of Development Management
- Scrutiny Training

The Committee welcomed confirmation that the Council's website page for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had been updated; work programmes, the work programme suggestion form, annual reports, and Scrutiny Working Groups' review reports had been posted and archived.

SO/84 **TO RECEIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME**

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

SO/85 **ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT CONSIDERED URGENT**

The Chairman expressed his hope that the understanding of Scrutiny and the continuation of good practices developed during the Council's life would be carried over into the next Council; the experience of re-elected Members would be crucial.

The Chairman asked all of the Working Groups to prepare a list of their ongoing work programme tasks.

The Chairman thanked the Committee Members for all their work and support, and the chairmen of the Working Groups for their excellent work. He felt that the Committee had reviewed important issues, developed excellent working relationships with Council officers, and had engaged with local organisations and agencies.

The Committee Members thanked the Chairman for his hard work and dedication to the Committee's work.

The meeting finished at 8.20 p.m. having commenced at 5.34 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**