

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**1 JUNE 2020**

Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis, Roy Cornell, Michael Croker, Leonard Crosbie, Brian Donnelly, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Tim Lloyd, Roger Noel, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, David Skipp, Ian Stannard and James Wright

Also Present: Councillors: Ruth Fletcher, John Milne

SO/1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of the Council Karen Burgess took the Chair for the election of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny. Councillor Bevis was nominated by Councillor Haigh and seconded by Councillor Crosbie. There were no other nominations and Councillor Bevis was duly elected as Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny for the municipal year 2020 – 21. Councillor Burgess left and Councillor Bevis took the Chair.

SO/2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Donnelly was nominated for the position of Vice Chairman by Councillor Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Greening. There were no further nominations and Councillor Donnelly was duly elected Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2020-21.

SO/3 **TO APPROVE THE TIME OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT YEAR**

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet at 5.30pm during the municipal year 2020 – 21.

SO/4 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record to be signed by the Committee Chairman when the COVID-19 situation had abated.

SO/5 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/6 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Director of Corporate Resources gave an announcement from the Chief Executive that there had been a discussion at Full Council about giving a payment of £150 to people of working age without full exemption who were receiving help via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. It was supposed to have gone live by this point but it had not because an upgrade to the Revenues computer system had failed on upload into the live system. The supplier had promised a revised patch of the computer system by the end of June. The Council had put a freeze on the recovery of unpaid Council Tax for the affected customers until after this point.

SO/7 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Scrutiny Officer explained that this report was a statutory requirement and noted that the work programme around Task and Finish groups had been delayed due to the COVID-19 situation. It was recommended that the report should be amended accordingly. Councillors should send their suggestions to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and the report would be returned for approval at the next meeting.

SO/8 **UPDATE FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

The Chairman asked whether the work of the Task and Finish Group on Off Street Parking would be completed by the next meeting of the Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> July. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group stated that he believed it would be. He requested that the Scrutiny Officer emailed the members of the Task and Finish Group for proposals for the final report as previously.

The Chairman asked for a progress update from the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group on Public Health. He reported that the new Chairman of the West Sussex CCGs and some of her officers had agreed to come for a meeting at the end of April 2020 but the meeting had been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. It would be rescheduled when possible.

SO/9 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Cabinet Forward Plan.

SO/10 **REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE**

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report on the Council's Finances. The Council delivered a £246K revenue surplus. This was much closer to budget than in previous years. The projected capital spend in the year was below target. There would be a report to Cabinet in July which would recommend transferring the revenue surplus.

Councillors expressed concern about the 2020/21 financial year. There was a question around whether capital projects would be lost. Current estimates about how much the Council would lose ranged from £3.5 million after grants to £8 million after using all the Government grant of £1.4m. Existing projects might have to be cancelled as well as future capital projects or future revenue expenditure might have to be shrunk. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets had asked for a report on the Council's financial options to be brought forward to July 2020. The Government had postponed the Fair Funding and business rates reviews. This was likely to improve the Council's funding position for the 2021/22 financial year and help offset the losses arising from COVID-19.

There was a question about what the Transformation Reserve was used for. There was a lot expenditure on digitalisation and there was a question about how this was progressing. The Director reported that the cost was not around procurement but was due to changing processes and there would be savings in the long run. Finance and Human Resources were digitalised first and invoices were now paid automatically.

There was a further question around the spend on staff development costs. The Director talked about how there had been professional training for officers where they had not been able to recruit staff for posts requiring specialist qualifications. There were further questions around training for the Technology Team.

It was noted that the capital budget for commercial property had not been spent and there was a question about how the property portfolio was performing. Oakhurst phase 4 had been delayed and the budget carried forward.

SO/11 **VALEDICTORY STATEMENT FROM THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN**

This agenda item was postponed because the outgoing Chairman had been unwell. He said when he was able to prepare the statement he would issue it by email.

*The meeting closed at 6.27 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN