

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
21 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis (Chairman), Brian Donnelly (Vice-Chairman), Roy Cornell, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Tim Lloyd, Roger Noel, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, David Skipp, Ian Stannard and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Michael Croker

SO/22 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 were approved and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

SO/23 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/24 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Councillor Leonard Crosbie.

SO/25 **CARBON REDUCTION TARGET AND ACTION PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Waste introduced the Carbon Reduction Target Setting and Action Plan.

The Environmental Coordination Manager summarised the report for the group.

In October 2019, the Carbon Trust calculated the Council's baseline carbon footprint for 2018/19. A new consultant, Anthesis, had used this as a basis for analysing different methodologies for setting a carbon neutral target. They suggested that the most appropriate for the Council is known as an Absolute Target, referring to the total amount of emissions being emitted in a straight line to a target date, with the same reduction in emissions each year. This type of target was considered straightforward, easy to monitor and allowed some emissions to be offset.

Anthesis had recommended two targets for the Council:

The first target included things that the Council had direct control over e.g. Council owned vehicle emissions. It was suggested that these things become Carbon Neutral by 2030. This was an aspirational target as there were many

uncertainties such as changing technology and the need for detailed costs for some of the actions required to reach carbon neutrality, such as retrofitting buildings.

The second target included actions that the Council only had indirect control over e.g. Contracts. It was suggested that these things become Carbon Neutral by 2050. This target reflected the challenges of reducing carbon from sources that are not within the Council's direct control with the target date mirroring the national UK target.

In order to start progress towards meeting the target a short term action plan has been pulled together; based on the report received from the consultant.

The Committee expressed a desire to be involved in this area of work going forward.

SO/26 **FINANCE & PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report on the Council's Finance and Performance in 2020/21.

Projects the Council had completed or made significant progress on over the first quarter included:

Green Agenda

Significant progress had been made on all four Corporate Plan priority activities: A carbon audit had been undertaken to understand the Council's current carbon footprint and work was progressing on an action plan and target to the Council becoming a carbon neutral organisation. A project brief would be drawn up to understand pathways for the District to become carbon neutral. Working with Sussex Wildlife on the Wilder Horsham project, a Landowner Advisor post and part-time Community Support Officer post had been appointed, meaning that meaningful engagement with landowners, groups and Parish Councils could commence.

Local Plan

Following the Reg 18 consultation, an initial report had been published on the Council website, and work was now progressing towards the November 2020 Reg 19 publication date. The Planning White Paper's implications for HDC were being considered.

Highwood Community Centre

A community asset study was due to commence and a further option would also be considered.

Warnham Discovery Hub

The Discovery Hub building was due to be completed at the end September 2020, landscaping works would be carried out subject to bird nesting season.

Oakhurst Business Park Units

These units were expected to complete towards the end of September 2020. On completion the properties would be let, and return on investment of 8% was forecasted.

Officers had forecasted a year-end revenue deficit of £5.6m. Income had been significantly affected by the impact of Covid-19, with parking being particularly affected. Parking together with the contractual expenditure obligations in Leisure Services made up around three quarters of the forecast overspend.

Officers across the Council were working through general service actions to limit expenditure to improve the position before the year-end, including revisiting all expenditure and income items within the budget and forecast.

Work had also commenced on the restructure of some services to bring forward longer term efficiencies, beginning with the Capitol and Museum but now progressing into all services.

Capital expenditure at Month 4 was £1.3m (16%) of the £8.5m capital programme, which was reduced in size in July 2020 to focus on essential projects and those with a financial return. By comparison, spend on capital was £3.65m (17%) of the £21.2m programme at same period in 2019/20. An outturn of £7.9m or 93% was forecast by officers.

An analysis of performance indicators showed 62% within target and 9.5% close to target, and 28.5% below target. The impact of Covid-19 could be seen in a number of those KPIs where targets had not been met, especially those related to Leisure and Culture, and Parking.

SO/27 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Task & Finish Group on Off Street Parking would organise a meeting to convene the group and finalise a report.

It was agreed that the Task & Finish group on Public Health would defer all meetings until after the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It was agreed that the Work Programme Suggestion form that had been received be deferred until the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny to allow the Member who raised the suggestion to attend.

SO/28 **FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan was noted by the committee.

SO/29 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN