

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**24 JANUARY 2022**

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Vice-Chairman), Martin Boffey, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Nigel Jupp and Tim Lloyd

Apologies: Councillors: Tony Bevis, Matthew Allen, Billy Greening, John Milne, Bob Platt, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, Jim Sanson and Ian Stannard

Also Present: Councillors: Tony Hogben and Diana van der Klugt

SO/42 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/43 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor Jupp (also a West Sussex County Councillor) and Councillor Boffey (Vice Chairman of Horsham Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council).

SO/44 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Philip Circus raised concerns about changes in Committee membership introduced by the newly appointed Leader following the Cabinet reshuffle in December. A majority of Committee members present agreed that the Chairman of the Committee should raise these concerns at Cabinet on 27 January.

SO/45 **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Diana van der Klugt, who represented Horsham District Council on the South Downs National Park Authority. The presentation included considerable detail on the history, policies and deliveries of the Authority. In response to specific questions, it was clarified that the Authority had an Affordable Housing Policy which aimed to ensure that a representative demographic was able to live within the area covered.

SO/46 **REVIEW OF THE 2022/23 BUDGET AND THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2025/26**

It was noted that all members of the Committee had previously received detailed briefings on the 2022/23 Budget in other forums. The session was therefore agreed as an opportunity for questions and clarifications with the

Head of Finance & Performance. Some questions had previously been submitted and detailed responses received. Among the issues clarified at the meeting were:

- Current expenditure was around £38m of which around £16m was salaries. Every 1% salary increase is approximately £0.2m after on costs. The Council was projecting a 1.5% increase in these costs but the risk is that it is higher. If inflation on all other expenditure rose by the current 5%, as opposed to the average of 3% used in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, additional costs may reach £0.4m p.a. though some contract expenditure was fixed and not affected by inflation, whereas other might be linked to RPI which is higher. Therefore, whilst difficult to quantify, the risk of inflation might be indicatively 'measured' at around £0.5m p.a.
- The Council's engineer had said the three carpark capital projects included in the plans for 2022/23 were deliverable. All were out to tender or ready to progress.
- Replacement of the Waste Collection fleet was due in the later part of the current decade. Current research suggested that much of existing electric vehicle technology was not sufficiently robust for such large vehicles. This was being kept under review and it was anticipated that better green / hybrid options would be available as the replacement deadlines were approached.
- Suggestion that Council Tax increases should be reviewed in the light of increasing inflation.
- Recognition that the Capitol Theatre was projected to make a loss, but clarified that this was in line with expectations, given the impact of Covid19 restrictions, and that the theatre was seen as a valuable resource for the District and beyond. The £330k subsidy included in the current year's funding included £50k to enable future options to be assessed.
- Proposed car parking charge increases were generally welcomed though some perceived inconsistencies were pointed out by the Committee members.

#### SO/47 **UPDATES FROM TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

The Sustainable Travel Task & Finish Group was moving toward a final report and would be meeting on 2 February with a target to bring a final report to the March Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

SO/48 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme was noted and additional items for the March meeting acknowledged. It was also agreed that an invitation would be extended to the Head of Property & Facilities to attend that meeting.

SO/49 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

*The meeting closed at 8.18 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**