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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 23rd January, 2023 at 5.30 pm

Conference Room, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham

Councillors:

Tony Bevis (Chairman)	
Ian Stannard (Vice-Chairman)	
Philip Circus	Tim Lloyd
Paul Clarke	John Milne
Ruth Fletcher	Bob Platt
Billy Greening	Jack Saheid
Nigel Jupp	David Skipp
Richard Landeryou	

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Jane Eaton  
Chief Executive

## Agenda

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	Page No.
1. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2. <b>Minutes</b>	
To approve as correct the minutes of the meetings held on 26 September and 21 November 2022	
<i>(Note: If any Member wishes to propose an amendment to the minutes they should submit this in writing to <a href="mailto:committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk">committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk</a> at least 24 hours before the meeting. Where applicable, the audio recording of the meeting will be checked to ensure the accuracy of the proposed amendment.)</i>	
a) Minutes of 26 September	3 - 6
b) Minutes of 21 November	7 - 10
3. <b>Declarations of Members' Interests</b>	
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Committee	
4. <b>Announcements</b>	
To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Committee or the Chief Executive	

5. **Updates from Task & Finish Groups**

To receive a progress update from the current Task & Finish Group

6. **Review of the 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

To receive details of the proposed budget from the Director of Resources and to ask questions of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking (the report to Cabinet will be available from 18 January via this link: [Cabinet agenda - 26 January](#) )

7. **Work Programme**

11 - 12

To review the current work programme

8. **Urgent Business**

Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as urgent because of the special circumstances

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis (Chairman), Ian Stannard (Vice-Chairman), Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Nigel Jupp, Richard Landeryou, John Milne, Bob Platt and David Skipp

Apologies: Councillors: Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Tim Lloyd, Josh Potts and Jack Saheid

### SO/22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### SO/23 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

### SO/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

### SO/25 ANNUAL CRIME & DISORDER UPDATE

The Chairman advised that Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection was unable to attend this evening and sent her apologies.

The Head of Housing & Community Services, gave an overview of the Annual Crime and Disorder update, which raised awareness of the situation for 2021. In the Horsham District, overall crime increased by 1.3% compared to 2020 but was down 7.5% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Horsham had the second lowest recorded crime rate across West Sussex.

It was noted that reported Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) offences were significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels, but over 88% of these related to neighbour nuisance. It was advised that the Council has only limited powers to address this – effectively mediation support - and that the most effective response is through working in partnership with registered housing providers.

It was emphasised that the message to report crime could be strengthened since the data, and Police response priorities, can only reflect or address that which is identified. Reporting, even if there is no direct outcome, is an important part of building a clearer picture, against which further reports can be set and contextually assessed.

The Committee recommended that messaging relating to the need to report, and the positive picture emerging from the update should be enhanced to counter negative impacts of some social media. The Head of Housing & Community Services was asked to secure information about conviction rates and ensure that this was included in public messaging .

Further discussion of the report and it's implications took place and among the issues raised were:

- The likelihood that police staffing resources would increase. Advice will be requested from the Police on this, but it was advised that the number of PCSOs has increased from 203 to 291 in the last four years.
- Noted that the Wardens scheme has worked successfully with the Police locally and provided vital intelligence to enable the police to decide where to deploy resources. The Head of Housing & Community Services confirmed there were currently seven Neighbourhood Warden schemes, which were largely funded by the Parishes (after being pump primed by the Council). It was agreed that the positive impact of the Wardens is another message to be strengthened, and that this might encourage other parishes to consider funding them.
- The Chairman advised that an all member briefing with Police colleagues will be held later in the autumn.

#### SO/26 **REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IN 2022/23**

The Interim Director of Resources introduced the report on the Council's Finance and Performance in 2022/23 at Month 4, which is an operational surplus of £250k and talked through the details set out in the executive summary of the report. A more favourable return on investment income and an increase in parking income offset the rising costs, in particular for HVO fuel and in Housing due to an increase in board and lodging costs. The overall funding position forecast was set to be a £0.27m deficit. This was largely due to the pay offer for staff, which was significantly higher than forecast. It was noted that the situation with a number of debtors set out in the appendix to the report had improved significantly since the report was published.

Capital expenditure at Month 4 was 8% of the £12.1m capital programme. The Director of Resources advised that the officers' forecasts of expenditure on capital projects had been over optimistic and, because of this, the Director of Resources had instructed a proper review at Month 5. The latest forecast was therefore more realistic. The Director of Resources confirmed that he was working with officers to ensure that future Capital project forecasts were more realistic.

He explained why some items in the capital programme had been delayed and advised that some would be starting in the autumn. He also explained why some of the capital programme budget would not be spent, including the Public Realm Strategy stage 2 that was not going ahead due to capacity restraints. Further information regarding this strategy was requested.

Members discussed Horsham Museum and the drop in attendance compared to the period before its closure during Covid. There was some question over the accuracy of previously quoted Museum visitor numbers and the Director of Resources agreed that he would confirm how these figures were calculated.

With regards to Council Tax and Business Rates collections, the Committee was advised of the challenge in setting accurate targets given the uncertainties arising from the economy and cost of living pressures, but were assured that targets would be revised and added.

Members sought clarification on the reporting of the number of fly-tipping incidents and clearances, and the Director of Resources agreed to give fuller information on the significance of the figures set out in the appendix.

#### SO/27 **TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE**

The Committee considered areas of policy and delivery that might merit closer scrutiny through the creation of time-limited, goal-driven Task & Finish Groups. A number of potential options were considered:

**Police performance:** A proposal was made to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise Police performance. It was noted that the Sussex Police and Crime Panel served that purpose and any questions from the Committee could be directed to that body. After discussion it was agreed not to set up Task & Finish Group at this stage, but to consider inviting local MP, Jeremy Quin (Home Office Minister of State in the Home Office with responsibility for Policing, Fire and Tackling Crime), to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Consultants:** It was proposed, and agreed, that a Task & Finish Group be set up to look at the Council's use of consultants, which had increased in recent years. It was agreed that this should be taken forward at the earliest opportunity and an outline brief and invitation to all councillors for expressions of interest would be initiated with a view to approval and appointment at the next Committee meeting.

**S106 contributions:** It was proposed that a Task & Finish Group be set up to look at the writing and managing of S106 agreements (which require that infrastructural, community and affordability requirements are addressed in planning applications as appropriate). However it was noted that this topic had been looked into several years ago. It was agreed that the findings of the previous Task & Finish Group be brought to the next meeting of the Committee. The previous report will be circulated to Members for information.

**Leisure Facilities:** Councillor Billy Greening agreed to investigate whether a Task & Finish Group to look at the Council's strategy for leisure provision would be appropriate.

The Chairman advised that he had asked officers what progress had been made in implementing the recommendations of the Sustainable Travel Task & Finish Group and was awaiting a response.

SO/28 **SCRUTINY TRAINING**

Details of Scrutiny Member Development and Improvement training offered by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. The Committee agreed to undertake this training, and a session would be booked in due course.

SO/29 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PLAN**

The Chairman confirmed that Councillor Tony Hogben, Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking would be invited to a future meeting to discuss the Council's budget for 2023/24 before it is considered by Council in February 2023.

The Chairman agreed that Jane Eaton, Chief Executive, and the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jonathon Chowen, would be invited to a future meeting to discuss the Corporate Plan before it is considered by Cabinet in January 2023.

Task & Finish Group on the Council's use of consultants to be added.

An invitation to Jeremy Quin MP to attend a meeting in relation to Crime & Disorder issues may also to be added.

SO/30 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

SO/31 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

*The meeting closed at 7.05 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** **21 NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis (Chairman), Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Nigel Jupp, Richard Landeryou, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Bob Platt and David Skipp

Apologies: Councillors: Ian Stannard

Absent: Councillors: Josh Potts and Jack Saheid

### SO/33 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 26 September, was deferred to the next meeting in the light of a request for more detail to be included in Minute No. SO/26 (Report on the Council's Finance and Performance in 2022/23).

### SO/34 **MINUTES OF CALL-IN MEETING, HELD ON 20 OCTOBER**

The minutes of the additional meeting held on 20 October in response to a call-in request were approved and signed by the Chairman.

### SO/35 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillors Nigel Jupp and John Milne advised that they were also Councillors for West Sussex County Council.

### SO/36 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Announcements.

### SO/37 **REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IN 2022/23**

The Interim Director of Resources introduced the report on the Council's Finance and Performance in 2022/23 at Month 6. A more favourable return on investment income and an increase in parking income offset rising costs, in particular for HVO fuel, in Housing due to an increase in board and lodging costs, and a reduction in Planning income. Long-term outstanding debt was starting to fall but the pay settlement with a fixed sum for all employees created a further challenge and the overall funding position forecast was now £0.23m deficit.

The Capital programme remained underspent with a projected outturn of 63% of planned spend over the year. It was noted that some projects took more than one year to undertake, but needed to be included in the Capital programme before the budget was spent. Expenditure also tended to be back-weighted towards the second half of the year allowing necessary consultation before

operative progression. The Director of Resources would encourage officers to set a less ambitious and more realistic capital programme for next year.

The Director of Resources talked through the five KPIs given red status, as set out in the appendix. Members were advised that the figures for households in temporary accommodation would improve once Roffey Place, which will provide accommodation for 50 adults finding pathways out of homelessness, is opened in December. The arrears collection of business rates had not been prioritised due to the additional pressure on the team caused by the need to process Covid-relief funding, but this could now be prioritised. And the increase in fly-tipping may be because reporting had been made easier so more cases were being brought to the Council's attention.

Members were advised that the Council was working with the leisure centres operator on the challenges caused by the increased cost of energy. They were looking at ways of decreasing their energy use at the leisure centres, and solar panels were going to be installed at The Bridge. Overall the income received had reduced, though the take up of swimming had increased.

With regards to The Capitol, energy use would be reduced with the introduction of halogen lighting. The price of tickets was not currently being reviewed.

- Members discussed the anticipated deficit on Horsham Museum and requested that the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture be invited to the next meeting to answer questions on the museum's attendance. It was also requested that the Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking be asked for his comments on the financial performance of the museum.

In response to questions raised, the Director of Resources agreed to look into the following:

- To check that the use of what3words for reporting fly-tipping was clearly explained on the council's website.
- The replacing of the top deck at Swan Walk was scheduled for November. It was requested this be queried as it may be easier to undertake earlier in the year.
- Establishment of a Climate Change Panel (Appendix E): Members sought assurance that there would be an opportunity for all Councillors to be involved. The Director of Resources would ask the Environmental Coordination Manager for further details.
- Councillor Nigel Jupp, local Member for Billingshurst, questioned whether a decision had been made on the £165k for Billingshurst carpark. The Director of Resources advised that such a specific question could be better answered outside the meeting and would supply a response.



- Rookwood Golf Course study (Appendix E): Members requested confirmation of the schedule for when this study would be completed before further consultation in 2023.

SO/38 **TASK & FINISH GROUPS - AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The membership of the proposed Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the use of Consultants was agreed. Membership was confirmed as David Skipp, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke and John Milne. An initial meeting would be convened as soon as possible.

Councillor Billy Greening suggested that the contract with the current leisure centres operator should be scrutinised and suggested that the Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking should be questioned on this at the next meeting. It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture should be included in this item as well.

- Members requested a briefing note for circulation prior to the meeting. The Director of Resources agreed to provide a briefing note regarding the leisure centre's contract and further details regarding the changes caused by Covid and its aftermath.

SO/39 **POLICE PERFORMANCE**

Previous discussion had led to an agreement to request Jeremy Quin MP to attend the next meeting, but Cabinet reshuffles have made this a less viable option. It was proposed to revert to the previously considered option and submit questions and concerns through the Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection to be raised at the WSCC Police & Crime Panel. Issues of immediate concern included domestic burglary, knife crime and road crime.

- The Chairman will write to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection on behalf of the committee.

SO/40 **S106 CONTRIBUTIONS**

The report of the Task & Finish Group that had looked at this issue in 2017 had been circulated for review. It was agreed that it remained an issue of concern that did not always deliver the expected outcomes. Councillors could challenge the terms and management of agreements affecting their wards, but it was considered that this should not be dependent upon individual Councillor endeavour.

- The Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that Councillor Milne would produce a paper for a future meeting of the Committee setting out appropriate terms of reference for a future Task & Finish Group. He would seek officer advice when drafting these.

SO/41 **SCRUTINY TRAINING**

It was confirmed that training for Scrutiny has now been organised for all members of the Committee and will be delivered by Zoom on 12 December. Supporting paperwork would be circulated after the session.

SO/42 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN FOR 2022/23**

The Work Plan was noted. The Chairman stated that there were sufficient items on the current Work Plan, given the pressures of the forthcoming budget and Local Plan.

SO/43 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted. It was noted that the Local Plan, scheduled to be considered on 18 January, was on the current published Forward Plan.

SO/44 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

*The meeting closed at 7.32 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN

# Agenda Item 7

## Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23 - Updated January 2023

Date of Meeting	Items for Meeting
20 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report on the Council's Finance &amp; Performance Q3</li><li>• Leisure Places: to invite the Cabinet Members for Leisure &amp; Culture and Finance &amp; Parking</li><li>• Horsham Museum: to invite the Cabinet Member for Leisure &amp; Culture</li><li>• Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme</li><li>• Update from Task &amp; Finish Groups: Report of the Task &amp; Finish Group on the use of Consultants</li><li>• Cabinet Forward Plan</li></ul>
5 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report on the Council's Finance &amp; Performance</li></ul>
Date tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S106 Contributions – to agree Terms of Reference for Task &amp; Finish Group if required</li></ul>

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