

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**23 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Present: Councillors: Leonard Crosbie (Chairman), Brian Donnelly (Vice-Chairman), Michael Croker, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, David Skipp and Ian Stannard

Apologies: Councillors: Roy Cornell and Tim Lloyd

Also Present: Councillor Ruth Fletcher

SO/25 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/26 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Jupp declared that he was the West Sussex County Councillor for Southwater and Nuthurst.

SO/27 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated that he had requested that the PowerPoint presentation on the Government's Scrutiny Guidance be given at the next Council meeting as a large proportion of the Councillors were new.

The Chairman stated that henceforth the minutes of all Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings would be reported to the full Council.

SO/28 **REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IN 2019/20**

The Committee received the quarterly report on the Council's finance and performance for the first quarter of the financial year from the Director of Corporate Resources.

During the discussion, the following issues were highlighted:

- That during the early part of the financial year it was common to see a projected overspend
- That the level of contamination of recycling was hard to manage because it was down to the behaviour of the public.
- That no additional running costs had been incurred by handing over the management of the revenues and benefits budget to LGSS. The

Director of Corporate Resources was congratulated regarding the resolution of the transfer of revenues and benefits work to LGSS.

- That Horsham District Council were a customer of LGSS whereas they were partners in the previous arrangement along with other councils.
- The transfer of the Revenues and Benefits computer system from Mid Sussex to LGSS was now complete.

The Director of Corporate Resources explained that with the payment of benefits, although the Council's error rate was currently below the level at which a subsidy loss would occur, if the auditor found a single error they could still extrapolate across the whole district population and decide to withhold money.

Councillors requested that in future the finance and performance information should compare one quarter with the same quarter from the previous year rather than the previous quarter from the current year. It was further noted that an annual total had previously been provided to the Committee. It was agreed that this should be provided to future meetings.

Councillors asked for the number of compliments received by the Council to be reported as well as the number of complaints.

The slightly lower proportion of invoices paid on time was noted and officers were asked for a further explanation of this.

With regard to the payment of business rates it was noted that Horsham District had a large proportion of small businesses and it is more difficult to get all the business rates collected from a lot of small businesses than to collect large amounts from a few big businesses.

## RESOLVED

That the Finance Team provide more detail on those who hadn't paid invoices resulting in a dropping off in performance.

### SO/29 **WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

#### i) Task and Finish Group on Cycling Strategy

A document entitled "Horsham's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Update for Overview and Scrutiny" (LCWIP) was noted in the light of the proposed task and finish group regarding a cycling strategy.

Central Government have produced a cycling strategy and wish all Councils to do some strategic work in this area. The work being done within the Council was centred on Horsham town and the surrounding area. Council Officers were being supported by consultants to do the work. Councillors with a town ward

had been invited to attend a workshop as part of the LCWIP development. The Horsham Town Cycling Group is working towards a deadline of November when draft LCWIPs are required to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

Councillors Haigh and Donnelly who had suggested task and finish groups on cycling reminded the committee of their proposals. They recommended having one task and finish group which was an amalgamation of their suggestions.

It was suggested that the Council needed to engage with neighbouring Crawley Borough regarding cycling.

There was a debate around whether to wait until the LCWIP had been completed or whether to run a group concurrently and discover what was planned for the district. The LCWIP is focussed on Horsham Town Centre. There was also concern that work would have to be completed before November 2019 to be in line for government funding.

#### ii) Task and Finish Group on Public Health

With regard to the proposed task and finish group on public health, there was a debate around whether it was a valuable exercise if no money was being given for new surgeries. It was considered that it would be valuable to generate publicity for the issue and that it would provide an opportunity to call in health representatives. They would be questioned about issues such as where one group of people have to agree to having a surgery and another have to agree to putting doctors in it. It was noted that external experts could sit on task and finish groups although they would have no voting rights and that task and finish groups were not politically proportional.

#### iii) Task and Finish Group on Off-Street Parking

It was noted that the issue of off street parking had been raised by a cabinet member at full council and that Reigate and Banstead council had successfully challenged Highway officers. It was considered a valuable exercise to establish the legal relationship between the District and County when it came to off street parking.

The Monitoring Officer's advice was noted. One Councillor requested that the Monitoring Officer's advice be added as an addendum to the minutes of the meeting. The advice was as followed:

The Highways Authority is a **statutory** consultee with regard to various types of development and these are listed in Schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

The Schedule provides descriptions of development where the Highways Authority **must** be consulted. The listed description details are relatively wide and open to interpretation and as given in Brian's suggestion – 'off road parking

for new residences, offices, social housing' this may well fit into the given descriptions of development.

For example:

Development other than minor development, likely to result in...

- An adverse impact on the safety of, or queuing on a classified road
- Construction, formation or laying out of access to or from a classified road
- A material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic entering or leaving a classified road or proposed highway
- Prejudice the improvement or construction of a classified road or highway
- Or where, the application site could still have the potential to exacerbate exiting operational classified roads

It is therefore arguable that the majority of applications with off road parking provisions would still fit in the development descriptions where consultation is statutory.

Not only that the Highway authority reserves it right to comment on any planning application that could affect the operation or road safety of any highway in their area.

Councillor Haigh stated that she had also been liaising with Councillor Circus regarding the Coast to Capital energy strategy.

## RESOLVED

That:

- a) Councillors Haigh and Donnelly would work to draw up questions to ask of the Horsham Town cycling group.
- b) To wait until after the Town Centre cycling strategy had been produced and then consider whether to form a cycling task and finish group to use the town centre document as a template for the whole district.
- c) The task and finish group on public health be approved and chaired by Councillor Skipp.
- d) The Public Health task and finish group would report their terms of reference at the next meeting of the Committee.
- e) The names of councillors interested in being on a task and finish group regarding off street parking would be passed to the Scrutiny Officer.

- f) Councillor Haigh undertook to circulate information regarding a Local Energy Plan.

SO/30 **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Chairman highlighted the following:

- Affordable homes policy
- Highwood Community Centre

The Chairman was concerned the Committee had not been consulted on the Corporate Plan although all committee members had seen the plan through the consultation with their political groups. It was agreed that members would submit comments on the Plan through the Scrutiny Officer to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.

The Chairman indicated that he would report to Full Council on Overview and Scrutiny's views on the Corporate Plan if appropriate.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) The Committee would ask for draft reports on the business case regarding the Highwood Community Centre before it went to Cabinet in November.
- b) The Committee requested that documents relating to the above be presented as working documents before any decisions were made.

SO/31 **DISCUSSION OF A REQUEST BY THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR AN UPDATE ON ALL NON STATUTORY EXPENDITURE (REVENUE / CAPITAL) SINCE 2015**

RESOLVED

That figures updating the committee on all non-statutory expenditure would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

SO/32 **REPORT ON LEISURE ATTENDANCE FIGURES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION**

It was noted that the new Everyman Cinema was creating competition for the Capitol.

SO/33 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman asked the committee to note section 4.3 of the report which outlined work completed by the committee during 2018/19.

SO/34 **CRIME AND DISORDER ANNUAL UPDATE**

RESOLVED

To ask the Health & Community Safety Partnership Manager whether neighbourhood wardens had reduced anti-social behaviour.

*The meeting closed at 8.01 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**