

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Horsham
District
Council**

Date

By the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

INFORMATION REPORT

Not Exempt

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20

Executive Summary

This report provides a review of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2019/20.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Refer the report to Council for noting.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To tell the Council about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2019/20 as required by the Constitution.

Background Papers

Final Report of the Task and Finish Group on Off Street Parking.

Wards affected: All

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Act of 2000 introduced the Cabinet system to speed up Council decision-making. The Act required all councils operating cabinet governance arrangements to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a counterbalance to the Cabinet.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny aims to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local people. Members of Overview and Scrutiny are encouraged to have an independent mind set and it is important to safeguard the independence of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee has the right to receive reports and other information in a timely manner in order to question decisions.
- 1.3 Overview and Scrutiny's role is to question the Cabinet, officers and representatives of other organisations and make recommendations to the Cabinet or Council. Overview and Scrutiny should improve the Council's decision-making process and make it clear and accessible.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny contributes to all Council policies.

3 Details

3.1 Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is set out in paragraph 6.2 of the Horsham District Council Constitution:
 - i) Assist in the strategic development of policy
 - ii) Review issues of local concern
 - iii) Review the policy of others within and outside the Council
 - iv) Call-in Cabinet decisions
 - v) Scrutinise the Council's decision-making processes
 - vi) Monitor the internal and external delivery of services
 - vii) Review specific services
 - viii) Monitor and scrutinise the activities of outside bodies.

3.2 Membership in 2019/20

- 3.2.1 At the start of the 2018/19 year the Committee members appointed by the Council were: Roy Cornell, Michael Croker, Leonard Crosbie, Brian Donnelly, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Tim Lloyd, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, David Skipp and Ian Stannard. The Committee elected Leonard Crosbie Chairman and Brian Donnelly Vice-Chairman.

3.2.2 James Wright joined the Committee in January 2020, replacing Richard Landeryou and Roger Noel joined the Committee in February 2020, replacing Lynn Lambert.

3.3 Work completed by the Committee during 2018/19

3.3.1 In summer 2018 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a Task and Finish Group to review the success of its previous review. Arising from this in November 2018 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish three working groups: Finance and Performance; Business Improvement and Community, to review these areas in more detail prior to them coming to the overall Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The 2019/20 Overview and Scrutiny Committee overturned the November 2018 recommendations in June 2019. Arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny Committee operated with up to three Task and Finish Groups and no standing sub-committees during the year.

3.3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received quarterly reports on the Council's corporate plan priorities, finance and performance for the financial year. They questioned the Director of Corporate Resources on points of detail in these reports and referred questions to other officers for written replies.

3.3.3. In September 2019 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an annual update on Crime and Disorder. This is one of its statutory roles.

3.3.4 In November 2018 the Committee received the Medium Term Financial Strategy on its way to Cabinet and the Chairman took the Committee's views to the Cabinet meeting.

3.3.5 In January 2020 the Committee reviewed the report to Cabinet on the proposals for the future of the Drill Hall and the Highwood Community Centre prior to the Cabinet decision.

3.3.6.1 Review of Off Street Parking

Following concerns from a member of the Committee that West Sussex County Council's SPD Planning Matrix did not allow for sufficient off street parking, Councillors looked into the possibility of removing West Sussex County Council as a statutory consultee on planning decisions and developing their own parking matrix.

The work of this Task and Finish Group was delayed by the COVID 19 situation.

The Group recommended to the Cabinet Member for XXX that a consultant be engaged for three months to develop a parking matrix for Horsham District similar to the one which had been developed by Arun District Council and that the County Council be consulted on parking matters in order to protect the Council from planning appeals. WSCC would consider road safety issues.

3.3.7.2 Review of Public Health

Following concerns about the difficulties of getting GP appointments and the amount of new housing putting a strain on the health infrastructure, a task and finish group on public health was established.

The work of this Task and Finish Group was delayed by the COVID 19 situation. A planned meeting with the new head of the Horsham CCG had to be delayed because of the health crisis.

3.4 Development of the Committee's skills

- 3.4.1 The Scrutiny Officer received training from South East Employers on Committee Administration in February and March 2020.

4 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in West Sussex

- 4.1.1 Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Mid Sussex District Councils, Crawley Borough Council and West Sussex County Council agreed in late 2012 have a Joint Scrutiny Steering Group. Worthing Borough and Adur District Councils decided not to take part in the formal arrangements at that stage but joined the group in November 2014. The Chairman of our Overview and Scrutiny Committee attends the Joint Scrutiny Steering Group.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will determine its work programme for the municipal year 2020/21 at its meeting on 1st June 2020 and add additional task and finish groups when suggested. Any councillor or member of the public can request a task and finish review and Overview and Scrutiny ask all councillors to do consider issues that would benefit from a review. The Horsham District Council website has a work programme suggestion form for this purpose.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 None, reporting to Council annually is a requirement of the Council's constitution.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 This report has no resource consequences and associated officer workload will be contained within the existing budget.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 There are no risks arising from the report. The Overview and Scrutiny function is a key mitigation to the risks associated with operating the Council running its decision making using a Cabinet system. Overview and Scrutiny's decision during the year to bring forward its meeting to precede Cabinet meetings improves its opportunity to help Cabinet make the right decisions for its residents, business and visitors.

9 Other Considerations

- 9.1 When scrutinising decisions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has regard to Crime & Disorder; Human Rights; Equality & Diversity and Sustainability. The

Committee considers a report on Crime and Disorder annually, in the 2018/19 year in June 2018.