

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 June 2021

By the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Horsham
District
Council**

INFORMATION REPORT

Not Exempt

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

Executive Summary

This report provides a review of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2020/21.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Refer the report and the forward plan to Council for noting.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) The Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to tell the Council about its work at the end of each municipal year and about the work it plans for the new municipal year.

Background Papers

Agendas, papers and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee June 2020 to April 2021.

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 be able 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is set out in article 6, 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 2020/21

- 3.2.1 At the start of the 2020/21 year the Committee members appointed by Council were: Tony Bevis, Roy Cornell, Mike Croker, Leonard Crosbie, Brian Donnelly, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Lynn Lambert, Tim Lloyd, Richard Landeryou, Josh Potts, Jack Saheid, Ian Stannard, David Skipp. At its June

meeting the Committee elected Tony Bevis Chairman and Brian Donnelly Vice-Chairman.

3.2.2 During the year the Committee held all its meetings via remote video link.

3.2.3 In September 2020 the Chairman played tribute to Committee member, and former Committee Chairman, Leonard Crosbie who had recently died. The Committee operated with a vacancy for the remainder of the year.

3.3 Work completed by the Committee during 2020/21

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 In June 2020 the Committee reviewed the work it carried out in 2019/20.

3.3.3 In July 2020 the Committee received a presentation from the Director of Communities on the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

3.3.4 In July 2020 the Committee received an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy from the Director of Corporate Resources in the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

3.3.5 In September 2020 the Committee reviewed the Cabinet report on the Council's carbon reduction target and action plan.

3.3.6 The Committee became involved with the review of Policy Development Advisory Groups during the winter. In November it received an update on the progress of the review. In January the Committee considered its views on the initial findings of the review at the request of the Governance Committee and fed these views back to the Governance Committee.

3.3.7 In January the Committee received a presentation it had requested about Affordable Housing from the Head of Housing and Community Services.

3.3.8 In March the Committee received a presentation it had requested on Horsham District Council's property investments from the Head of Property & Facilities.

3.3.9 The Committee had two task and finish groups active at the start of the year: the Off Street Parking Group and the Public Health group. In July the Public Health group decided to defer its work until after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic because it needed input from the National Health Service. In January the Committee resolved to set up a Sustainable Travel Task and Finish Group.

3.3.9.1 Review of Off-Street Parking

During the summer and autumn the Off-Street Parking Task and Finish Group completed its work and presented its draft report to the Committee in December. The Committee decided to recommend to Council:

- A consultant should be engaged for three months to develop a parking matrix for Horsham District Council similar to the one which had been developed by Arun District Council but fine-tuned to meet Horsham's particular requirements.
- The County Council be consulted on parking matters in respect of road safety issues.
- That the HDC Parking Protocol for new residential builds throughout HDC be:
 - 1 bed 2 parking spaces
 - 2 bed 2 parking spaces
 - 3 bed 3 parking spaces
 - 4 bed 3 parking spaces
- A new parking protocol be developed for business sites, retirement homes, care homes and restaurants & takeaways.
- Ducting for electrical car charging be placed in all new builds.
- Review the dimensions of garages and car ports.
- Consider prohibiting the conversion of garages or carports into rooms unless suitable garages or car ports are built in replacement on the same site

Council returned the report for some further work. In January the Committee reviewed the work again and received a presentation from the Head of Strategic Planning on the planning aspects of the proposal. The Committee amended the recommendations following debate and recommended to Council:

- Strategic Planning to develop a HDC Parking Standards SPD in consultation with the O&S Off Street Parking Task & Finish Group. The start date of this project to be decided by Strategic Planning.
- A consultant should be engaged for, say, six months to assist Strategic Planning in i) above to develop the parking standards for Horsham District Council similar to the one which had been developed by Arun District Council but fine-tuned to meet Horsham's particular requirements.
- A Budget be Approved for the employment of a consultant.
- That the HDC Parking Protocol for new residential builds throughout HDC, subject to evidence provided, be:
 - 1 bed - 2 parking spaces
 - 2 bed - 2 parking spaces
 - 3 bed - 3 parking spaces
 - 4 bed - 3 parking spaces
 - 5+ bed - 4 parking spaces

- A new parking protocol be developed for business sites, retirement homes, care homes and restaurants & takeaways:
 - Business Sites – floor space plus number of staff & visitor/delivery provision
 - Retirement Homes – one parking space per unit plus space for staff, visitors & deliveries
 - Care Homes – one space per member of staff plus space for visitors & deliveries
 - Restaurants & Takeaways – planning permission only granted if adequate public parking available in the vicinity.
- Ducting for electrical car charging be placed in all off street parking spaces of new builds.
- Review the dimensions of garages and car ports.
- In all new builds put in a Condition prohibiting the conversion of garages or carports into rooms unless suitable garages or car ports are built in replacement on the same site.
- Two cycle racks to be provided for each new unit.
- Developers must be made aware that they are responsible for providing appropriate off street car parking and not relying on street parking for their new builds.

3.3.9.2 Sustainable Travel

In January the Committee resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group on Sustainable Travel. In March the Committee agreed the members of this group would be Councillors Platt, Lindsay, Croker, Fletcher, Lloyd and Hogben.

3.4 **Development of the Committee's skills**

- 3.4.1 The Chairman attended a course on 24 February 2021 on Chairing Virtual Meetings run by the Local Government Information Unit.

4 **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in West Sussex**

- 4.1 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee received no invitations to such meetings in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 restrictions. He intends to reopen the conversation with peers in the new municipal year.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will determine its work programme for the municipal year 2021/22 year at this meeting and on 19 July. It will add additional task and finish groups when suggested throughout the year. 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 using a Cabinet system.

9 Other Considerations

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