

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 June 2017

Attendance:

Councillors:

Learney (Chairman) (P)

Evans (P)
Gemmell (P)
Pearson (P)
Stallard (P)

Thacker (P)
Thompson (P)
Tod
Weston (P)

Deputy Members:

Councillor Hiscock (Standing Deputy for Councillor Tod)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Horrill (Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing), Ashton (Portfolio Holder for Finance), Brook (Portfolio Holder for Built Environment), Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Professional Services), Griffiths (Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing), Humby (Portfolio Holder for Business Partnerships), Miller (Portfolio Holder for Estates) and Warwick (Portfolio Holder for Environment)

1. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Having regard to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors, Councillors Hiscock and Stallard each declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter on the agenda which may have a County Council involvement. However, as there were no material conflicts of interest, they remained in the room under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee, to participate and vote in all such matters.

Councillor Learney declared a personal interest in respect of Item 6 (Portfolio Plans 2016/17 Outturn) which tangentially referred to IBM, as her husband was an employee. She remained in the room and spoke and voted thereon.

2. **FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TIMES**

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the revised programme of meeting dates for 2017/18 outlined on the agenda, which had been rescheduled to enable the Committee to carry out a Cabinet policy overview and development role.

RESOLVED:

That the revised programme of Committee meeting dates for 2017/18 be confirmed as set out in the agenda.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of special meeting held on 22 May 2017, be approved and adopted.

4. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND JULY 2017 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee made reference to one amendment to the Scrutiny Work Programme to move the consideration of the 'Performance Management ISG – Recommendations' from 31 August 2017 to 2 October 2017. This was due to notification that the Chairman of the ISG, Councillor Stallard, would not be present at the meeting scheduled to take place on 31 August 2017 in order to present the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the July 2017 Forward Plan be noted; and

2. That, subject to the amendment set out above, the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017/18 be noted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No comments or questions were made during public participation

6. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE - PORTFOLIO PLANS 2016/17
OUTTURN**

(Report OS165 refers)

Councillors Ashton, Brook, Godfrey, Griffiths, Horrill, Humby, Miller and Warwick addressed the Committee to introduce their respective Portfolio Plan outturn reports for 2016/17 and each answered Members questions thereon.

Councillor Horrill drew Members attention to the Portfolio groupings listed within the Report which had been set out in the Portfolios from 2016/17 and prior to the changes that were made to Cabinet. As a result, there was some overlapping of Portfolio Holders and responsibilities in certain areas.

Councillor Horrill reported that, although further work was required, much had been done to meet the key objectives that had been set. This enabled clarity amongst objectives coming forward during 2017/18.

The Committee asked a number of detailed questions which the relevant Portfolio Holder responded to accordingly, as summarised below:

(a) Finance and Corporate Policy

- IT Projects –Corporate Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) was an important aspect of the Council Strategy to deliver financially sustainable budgets. Migration to Microsoft Sharepoint would provide a higher degree of flexibility across multiple teams and service areas.

In reference to the Council's shared IT service with Test Valley it was reported that substantial savings had been achieved over the past six years and that the service continued to work effectively.

- Universal Credit – It was noted that claimants remained low in Winchester due to low unemployment rates. The roll out of the Universal Credit programme was managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with a restriction to new single payments only. It was anticipated that this would expand to existing claimants in due course.
- River Park Leisure Centre – It was reported that work to upgrade facilities that were at the end of their life (i.e. toilet facilities) would ensue. However, as plans developed for the new leisure centre at Bar End, investment would only be provided to certain works. £300k had been allocated for the remedial end of life works at the facility and officers were in dialogue with the team at River Park on this matter.

(b) Built Environment

- Vanguard – Councillor Brook reported that extensive work had been undertaken on the Vanguard method over the past year to evolve the end to end experience for the customer.

In response to questions regarding processing of planning applications, as set out in the table on page 13 Appendix 2 of the Report, reference was made to 75.60% of minor applications determined by the Council within eight weeks or within an agreed timescale. Councillor Brook stated that where an agreed extension of time had been granted, this would include those cases where the applicant had requested additional time; not just the Council. However, she agreed to report back to Members of the Committee on these statistics in due course.

- Gypsy and Traveller Draft Consultation – Following concerns that the consultation period would be running over the summer months, Councillor Brook reported that the period of consultation had been extended from six to eight weeks.
- St Maurice's Covert – The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) provided an update on the positive progress of the scheme which was a joint project with the Winchester Town Forum. An Architect had been appointed to develop the scheme and more information would be provided during an open meeting for officers and stakeholders in July. It was anticipated that the scheme be delivered in early 2018.

(c) Business Partnerships

- Improving Broadband Speed and Connectivity across the District – Councillor Humby reported that this continued to be an issue in rural locations, notably Meon Valley, where households and over 700 businesses experienced difficulties getting sufficient systems in place to deliver data at an acceptable speed. Negotiations were ongoing with BT Openreach and other providers to resolve this problem.
- Development of the Bushfield camp site and Sir John Moore Barracks – It was noted that discussions had recently taken place regarding the development of Bushfield as an employment site. The report on the findings consultation had been positive, with further discussions to take place at a later date.

The Council was in early discussion with the MoD regarding development options for the use of the Sir John Moore barracks which would also provide significant opportunities for the District. Councillor Humby advised that discussion was taking place with all interested parties such as M3 LEP, Parish Council's etc to consider the best use for each site. It was noted that there was a desire for the military to consolidate their estates throughout the Country, achieving the best value going forward.

(d) Economy and Estates

- Development of Market Towns and Rural Areas – Councillor Miller confirmed that he would ensure that local Ward Members were informed of schemes as and when they occurred
- Creative Enterprise Centre – Councillor Horrill reported that Centre had planned to work in partnership with the University on this project who have since withdrawn. However, there was merit in looking for alternative partners to help deliver the Enterprise.

(e) Environment, Health and Wellbeing

- Fly-Tipping – Members noted the successful work that had been carried out by officers with the County Council and the Police. Reference was made to the ongoing issue of fly-tipping in ‘hotspot’ areas, particularly in rural locations.

The Committee considered that a pro-active approach be taken and the following suggestions were made: use of CCTV signage in prime fly-tipping locations to raise awareness; the issuing of a press release to rural areas addressing of consequences of fly-tipping; and the provision of a GIS map identifying the key sites for fly-tipping. The Committee noted that details of successful prosecutions were publicised locally.

(f) Housing

Councillor Horrill reported that following the positive engagement at various briefings, the Housing Team were putting together a plan of the affordability of works to prioritise these across the Housing Strategy. In addition, she outlined the positive work that had occurred during 2016/17, including New Home Delivery activity, Decent Homes and the Quality Maintenance Programme and referred to the on-going work carried out with partners including with the church community who provided suitable rented accommodation to the Council to house the Syrian refugees.

- Homelessness – In response to concerns regarding professional street beggars, it was noted that the ‘spare change for real change’ campaign had been established to ensure that money given to the homeless by the community was distributed appropriately by charities back to those who genuinely needed the assistance.
- Housing Repairs – It was noted that measures had been put in place to ensure that contractors making improvements to properties were fully aware of what parts were required prior to visiting to try and ensure that repairs were carried out in one visit only rather than a series of return visits.

(g) Professional Services

- Impact of Brexit - The Committee reported that it would be necessary for Members to consider the affect that Brexit may have on the Council in due course.

RESOLVED:

1. That the performance information, contained within the Report, and the comments of the Committee, as set out above, be noted;

2. That the positive work and achievements delivered across the Council in 2016/17 be congratulated; and

3. That, for future reference, this Report contain a consistent list of actions against the respective outcomes for the Committee's consideration.

7. **GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 2016/17**
(Report OS166 refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Ashton introduced the report which provided an overview of the Council's General Fund Revenue outturn and the Capital Programme outturn for 2016/17. He explained the proposals included to re-forecast the capital and revenue budgets to reflect the revised timings of major projects and one-off budget proposals, as set out in paragraph 10.7 of the report, to utilise the 2016/17 revenue underspend in order to support the Council Strategy. Councillor Ashton responded to Members' questions thereon.

He commended the financial management by officers resulting in a strong standing whereby the Council had delivered its services at a lower level of financial resource generating a revenue resource outturn which was £0.95m lower than the original budget estimate for 2016/17. This overall surplus for 2016/17 had been transferred to reserves as set out in Appendix C to the report.

Councillor Ashton drew Members' attention to the key variances in the General Fund Revenue net baseline expenditure outturn, outlined in paragraph 10.6, and to the options following a review of budget requirements, as tabled in paragraph 10.7 of the report, which the Committee considered to be a sensible use of the budget and a good investment for residents within the District.

The Committee considered that where the allocation of spending was attached to the Peer Review process, it would be necessary for Members to have oversight as to what areas these funding would be addressing. In response, the Leader advised the Committee that this matter would be in the domain of the Audit Committee who would assess this and report back to all as required.

In addition, reference was made to the IAS19 (International Accounting Standard Nineteen) adjustment, as set out in Appendix A. The Corporate Director advised that he would provide Members with a note summarising the rules of this Standard in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder have regard to the comments of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee when preparing the report to Cabinet on the matter.

8. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2016/17 OUTTURN AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

(Report OS167 refers)

Councillor Horrill introduced the Report and highlighted the hard work undertaken by the Housing Management Team to continue to keep budgets and planned works on track. The Report provided an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2016/17, the associated Housing Capital Programme and set out the revised forecasts for 2017/18 to reflect changes to costs (particularly in relation to the new build programme) and published early results for Housing's key performance indicators as at 31 March 2017 or for the 2016/17 year.

The Head of Housing Finance drew Members' attention to the financial implications and the detail behind these figures, set out in Appendices 1 to 9 to the Report. It was noted that the main reason for the underspend to the capital programme was as a result of slight delays that had occurred to the delivery of some projects. However, there had been sound progress made to meet many of the targets in the Housing Services Plan for 2016/17, as shown in paragraph 11.2 of the Report and the Team had achieved 100% compliance with the Decent Homes standard to Council properties as a result of close working practices with other departments across the Council.

Following a request from the Committee, the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) agreed to provide data regarding energy efficiency ratings for new build developments and also referred Members to the Asset Management Strategy which contained further information in this respect.

In conclusion, the Committee thanked the Housing Team and congratulated them on their achievements during 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder have regard to the comments of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee when preparing the report to Cabinet (Housing) Committee on the matter.

9. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2016/17**
(Report OS168 refers)

Councillor Ashton introduced the Report which detailed the performance of the treasury management function on the effects of the decisions taken and the transactions executed during 2016/17. He drew to Members' attention that the key concern was security to denote a return commensurate with risks. It was reported that the Council had been working closely with the County Council and had diversified its investment, looking at long term investments to level out any risk implications.

In conclusion, the Committee raised several points in relation to putting inflation ahead of investment returns to achieve better yields within the Treasury Management Strategy due to the element of 'hedging' taking place and the affects of Brexit. In response the Corporate Director (Professional Services advised that the Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Council on 23 February, made allowance for greater liquidity risk to consider against yield levels, interest rates and the credit environment.

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder have regard to the comments of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee when preparing the report to Cabinet on the matter.

10. **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY**
(Report OS169 refers)

Councillor Horrill introduced the Report which highlighted the Council's primary focus and key priorities for the coming five years and answered Members' questions thereon. The Strategy set out the challenges the Council faces to achieve the third strategic outcome 'Delivering quality Housing Options' and presented key objectives which had been translated into specific actions contained within supporting documents, as set out in page 26 of the draft Housing Strategy.

It was reported that consultation had been carried out on the Strategy with the Council's various key stakeholders, including TACT, Hampshire County Council commissioners and Parish Councils. Feedback from this consultation had been incorporated within the draft available for the Committee.

Councillor Horrill reported that the vision for the Strategy was to create cohesive communities and 'a place for everyone'. It was recognised that the Council's primary focus was to provide a better opportunity for housing choice and as a consequence, the Council were assessing their Housing and Planning Policies to investigate how the Council could accelerate its requirements with developers. This was also in light of the older persons housing strategy and to support the

opportunities for shared ownership etc to allow people to access housing differently.

During discussion, in summary, the following matters were raised which were responded to as appropriate:

- a. Provision of adequate housing for older people looking to downsize who wish to continue to live independently, despite mild mobility issues where stairs may not be appropriate.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) advised that at present families were waiting longer to be housed than this age group. However, flexibility in builds (be means of adaption etc) would be addressed to ensure opportunities were attractive to all markets.

- b. Failure to deliver the appropriate level of Affordable Housing on a number of developments coming forward, with developers offering contributions that were being spent in alternative areas to where development proposals are taking place (i.e North Whiteley).

It was recognised that the primary constraints in this respect were land and viability.

- c. Co-operation with neighbouring authorities (i.e. South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)) for development in rural areas.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) advised that housing demand was for the District as a whole and that working with was recognised as an important working dynamic. It was reported that developments were taking place in rural settlements such as Waltham Chase and Bishops Waltham where a number of planning applications had been approved in recent months.

- d. Making Affordable Housing more affordable.

It was noted that officers were reviewing the affordable housing mechanism to help people access properties and the Council was in dialogue with developers to influence the type of homes to fulfil community need.

- e. The provision of a shared living model and the necessity of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) among younger people due to the increasing cost of living.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) reported that a modern options to shared living were being tested in other areas, comprising of individual living accommodation units with integrated shared communal facilities such as a gym contained within. Councillor Horrill stated that these housing mix options would be incorporated within the Strategy going forward.

During debate, the Committee agreed that the following comments be made to Cabinet for inclusion within the Draft Housing Strategy:

- (i) The need for adequate property downsizing options
- (ii) Greater Affordable Housing from market developers
- (iii) Clarity on how the Housing Strategy applies to SDNPA
- (iv) Inclusion of housing for young people (i.e HMO's, Modern shared living)
- (v) Is the Local Plan delivering within Housing? Is there a workable link between the two?
- (vi) Is Affordable Housing being achieved in developments within certain areas (i.e the Town area)
- (vii) Student Accommodation – Zoned areas for student housing
- (viii) Recognise the long and short term costs when thinking about Affordable Housing

RESOLVED :

That the Portfolio Holder have regard to the comments of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee when preparing the report to Cabinet (Housing) Committee on the matter.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.35pm

Chairman