

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 15 August 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Dorn (Chairman), Butler (Vice-Chairman), Smith, Butcher, Coburn, Davies, Engström, Harward, Farmer, Thomas and Vernon

Officers:

Graeme Clark	Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Mark Jaggard	Executive Director, Place
Sharon Black	Committee and Member Services Manager

27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting 18th July 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed by Cllr Dorn; Seconded by Cllr Butcher. Agreed unanimously.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received. All members were present.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced the following:

- In response to the question at the last meeting regarding non-O&S member attendance at service panel meetings, it had been confirmed by the Senior Leadership Team that only those O&S members appointed to service panels could attend. The full service panel reports are included on the O&S agenda and if an issue was substantial, then it was felt that a request could be made to discuss the issue at a future O&S meeting
- Under Minute 10, at the June meeting, nominations were agreed for the Butterwood Homes Scrutiny Panel as being Cllrs Davies, Engstrom, Farmer and Smith. The minutes of the June meeting had not fully captured the nominations and voting. It was therefore confirmed that it had been agreed to unanimously agree to appoint the four Councillors to the Scrutiny Panel for 2023/24. A post meeting note would be added to the June minutes for completeness
- The Gypsy and Traveller Task and Finish Group would be deferred until the new year, with the Chief Executive attending the October O&S

meeting to present a report outlining the scope of the review. The Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group membership and Terms of Reference would be discussed at the September O&S meeting.

Treasury training would be on 12 October, between 6.30pm-8.00pm and would be hybrid, both in the Council Chamber and online.

31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

There were no public participation items.

32 Q1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT AND FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2023/24 – INCORPORATING TREASURY ACTIVITY

The S151 introduced this item by reminding members that this was the routine reporting of the Q1 budget monitoring forecast for 2023/24, and showed the position expected at the end of the financial year.

Members noted:

- The report would be presented to Cabinet at their September meeting
- There was a forecasted £0.96M surplus, based on best information available
- Revenue and capital projects were broadly on budget, but that two community projects carried forward from last year were unlikely to go ahead
- £131K of developer contributions had been transferred into Earmarked Reserves (EMR), and were targeted to be spent later in the year
- There were likely to be pressures on the budget for buildings and maintenance, and building control income was forecasted to be less than budgeted
- The Treasury report had been incorporated into the Q1 report; the Council was now receiving better interest rates than originally budgeted for
- There was likely to be a continuation in the increase in income through recycling
- ESG ratings had been included in the Treasury report in line with discussions at previous meetings

Members questioned:

- What the interest rates budgeted for were versus those received
- How long the fixed term rates were on loans
- Whether the 2023/24 pay award had yet been agreed, and if it was likely to be around the 10% budgeted
- Whether the use of agency staff was likely to continue at its current rate or reduce as permanent staff were recruited
- Whether the utilities costs included costs for leisure centres. The S151 Officer confirmed that for buildings where there was a lease in place, it was for the lease holder to pay utility bills, and therefore the costs were for HDC buildings such as the Civic Offices.

- Whether there were fixed term contracts for utilities and, if so, how long these were for
- Why the budget for streets and grounds had been significantly reduced and if this would have an impact on services. The S151 Officer confirmed that this would not be the case as this was a budget correction only.
- Where funding for homes for Ukraine guests was within the budget.
- Where funding from developers for SANGS was held within the budget

In noting the report, the S151 Officer and the Finance team were thanked for their work in ensuring that the Council remained within budget.

33 UPDATE ON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES

The Executive Director – Place introduced this item and explained that views on the three Flood Alleviation Schemes currently coordinated by Hart District Council were being sought, prior to consideration by Cabinet of the three projects.

The three projects were:

- Mill Corner, North Warnborough,
- Phoenix Green, Hartley Wintney,
- Kingsway, Blackwater.

Members heard:

- That these had been reviewed and recommendations on each of the three projects were being put forward
- Mill Corner had a number of challenges, and the Environment Agency (EA) was now carrying out its own scheme. It was proposed to abandon the Hart project and leave the EA to run their scheme
- The Phoenix Green project had been positively impacted by the local new housing development in Dilly Lane, and as such there had been no flooding for a number of years. It was proposed that consultants be brought on board to remodel the scheme and update the findings before deciding how to proceed.
- Kingsway was still flooding regularly despite previous work undertaken. Thames Water had included a project within their latest proposals, so it was felt that this project should be taken forward with a new project plan

Members debated:

- Whether there was sufficient funding to cover the cost of the Kingsway project. It was noted that it was possible to bid for further funding once the scheme had been commenced
- Managing the expectations of residents to ensure that they know what would happen if the funding was not forthcoming
- Whether all homeowners would need to opt into the Kingsway scheme – it was felt that there was no need to wait for all to agree before starting the project

- That the Kingsway project involved not just surface water but also sewage issues

Members questioned:

- Why there were no timescales in the report
- Whether there was empirical evidence to back up the claim that there had been no flooding at Phoenix Green for more than 8 years
- What the signoff process for the projects would be. Members were reminded that Cabinet would be looking at the report at their September meeting
- How it would be communicated to residents if the Phoenix Green project was abandoned, given that there was an issue some years before
- Whether stopping the Mill Corner project was acceptable, given that flooding occurs regularly.

Members noted:

- That the intention was that resources would be focussed on the project(s) approved by Cabinet
- Discussions were taking place with EA/Thames Water over the Kingsway project

It was agreed that the section in the report on recommendations to Cabinet needed further reinforcement and that the document generally needed reviewing for typographical errors before being sent to Cabinet.

In summarising the Chairman outlined the Committee's concerns regarding the timing of the review of the projects and that communications with residents was a key element of the process. Clarity over those schemes that were proposed to continue was required, and the report needed further work to ensure that timelines and KPIs were included.

34 SERVICE PANEL REVIEW - CORPORATE AND PLACE

Corporate

Members noted:

- There were no major concerns highlighted at the review meeting
- Both the Waste and Civic contracts would be coming to an end within the next 3 years, and options were being investigated

Place

Members noted:

- The majority of KPIs for the directorate were on track
- There had been some successful recruitment of tree officers
- There had been a good level of response to the LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme) consultation

A temporary member of agency staff would be helping to catch up with food safety inspections

35 LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN - ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2022/23

The annual report of the Local Government Ombudsman for 2022/23 was reviewed and noted.

Of the four complaints received, one had been referred back to the Council and 3 had been closed. None had been investigated or upheld.

(8.18pm Mr Jaggard left the meeting)

36 TERMS OF REFERENCE, PARTICIPANTS AND LEAD OF CCTV TASK AND FINISH GROUPS TO BE AGREED

The membership, lead member and Terms and Reference for the CCTV Task and Finish Group were discussed.

Members agreed:

- The Terms of Reference, with the amendment that the Task and Finish Group report back to Overview and Scrutiny in October 2023
- Membership of the Task and Finish Group to be Cllrs Davies, Farmer and Vernon
- The lead member would be agreed at the first Task and Finish Group meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Dorn; seconded by Cllr Butler
Unanimously agreed

37 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Cabinet Work Programme.

It was noted that Cabinet would receive a report on the Civic Regeneration project at their October meeting. The report of the Butterwood Homes Scrutiny Panel would also need to be presented to the November Cabinet meeting.

38 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Committee members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, and made updates as follows:

- Move the Butterwood Homes Scrutiny Panel meeting update to October
- An invitation to representatives from Hampshire County Council to come to a future meeting to outline any changes to on-street parking enforcement provision, as it was felt that there were less Civil Enforcement Officers in the District since the changeover

The meeting closed at 8.28 pm