

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 11 APRIL 2023

**TITLE OF REPORT: REVIEW OF THE WORK OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE OVER THE PAST YEAR 2022/23**

Report of: Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. To review the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past year 2022/23.

2. CHAIRMAN'S RECOMMENDATION

2.1. That Members note the report and the subsequent actions taken.

3. WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

3.1. Every local authority operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model has a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and up to nine other members. All executive decisions (i.e., those needed to implement the Policy Framework and Budget approved by the Council) are taken by the Cabinet.

3.2. Overview and Scrutiny bodies are not "decision making" bodies but are bodies which monitor and influence those that are. The Overview and Scrutiny role, carried out by non-Cabinet members, is designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- Reviewing and scrutinising decisions taken by the Cabinet (acting as a "critical friend")
- Considering aspects of the Council's performance
- Assisting in research, policy review and development
- Involving itself with external organisations operating in the district to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
- Providing a means of involving the communities in the Council's work.

3.3. The Committee also reviews and scrutinises decisions made, or actions proposed in connection with the Council functions, including that of budget monitoring and service delivery.

4. REVIEW OF 2022/23 AND THE ACTIONS TAKEN

4.1. This year, moving on from the Coronavirus pandemic, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with support from Officers have had a productive year.

4.2. Notable actions include the successful implementation of Service Panels which has given Members the opportunity to take ownership and also have time to carry out more in-depth examinations into service performance.

- 4.3. A specific cross party task and finish group was set up to look at the Council's approach to Conservation Area Appraisals.
- 4.4. Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an excellent introduction for newly elected Councillors to gain an understanding of the policies and procedures of local government, enabling them to contribute effectively during policy review, debates and decision-making.

4.5. Regular reports

The Committee received quarterly or bi-annual monitoring reports on the following

- Service performance relative to Service Plan and Key Performance Indicators on a quarterly basis (once the Service Panels had been formalised).
 - Part way through the year, the number of service Panel was revised from 4 to 3.
- Outturn Position, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) along with Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan Budget monitoring to ensure that the Council in on track to meet and stay within Council agreed budget parameters
- Hart Flood Forum – twice a year (including details of Parish Flood Forum)
- Corporate Risk Register update – bi-annual
- Cabinet Work Programme
- O&S Work Programme
- Analysis of complaints received by the Council.

4.6. Regular annual one-off reports -

The Committee also received:

- Prior to consideration by Cabinet the draft Treasury Management Strategy
- Draft Budget
- Draft Service Plans
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter
- Crime and Disorder Joint Committee update

4.7. Heads of Services

Heads of Services attended relevant meetings and answered questions about their Service Plans.

5. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS OF NOTE

5.1. Odiham Common Management Plan

Was reviewed and a broad set of cross-party comments passed to Cabinet, which they ignored.

5.2. Annual planning policy monitoring report

The report shows how Hart is progressing against its Local Plan targets.

5.3. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)

The committee received a detailed presentation from Sustrans and raised a number of questions and suggestions.

5.4. Butterwood homes (Hart Housing Company) update by scrutiny panel

The sub-committee providing oversight of Butterwood homes provided feedback to O&S.

5.5. Corporate Plan

Members provided feedback and comment alongside residents, prior to this going to Cabinet.

5.6. Review of Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders

Members provided comments and improvements to the draft document prior to them going to Cabinet.

5.7. Fleet Pond Green Corridor and Hartland Park Mitigation Works

The report was noted.

5.8. Corporate Risk Register

Bi-annually, Members reviewed the Corporate Risk Register which is reviewed by management on a regular basis and reported to members to provide assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to mitigate identified risks. The report was for noting only.

5.9. Climate Change Carbon Pathway Report

Members reviewed the Climate Pathway Report and provided comments to Cabinet on the baseline carbon footprint.

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