

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Dorn (Chairman), Smith (Vice-Chairman), Axaam, Butcher, Butler, Coburn, Davies, Engström and Farmer

In attendance:

Officers:

Kirsty Jenkins, Executive Director - Community
Steven Bennett, Change and Digital Manager
Jenny Murton, Committee Services Officer

99 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 14 March 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Smith as Acting Chair of that meeting, proposed the Minutes and was seconded by Councillor Butcher.

100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Wildsmith and Councillor Harward attended as his substitute.

101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations made.

102 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements.

103 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

104 QUARTER 4 COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

The Change and Digital Manager summarised the report, that updated Members on the number and outcome of customer complaints for Quarter 4, January–March 2023.

The report also presented the complaints performance for 2022/23 across the current range of metrics and considered any learning from the information presented across the first year of the new policy.

The Change and Digital Manager reported that the number of complaints received by the Council are generally low; the services receiving the highest number of complaints for quarter 4 were Planning, Council Tax and Waste and he will discuss this further with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Members questioned:

- What the 10-day limit to respond to complaints specifically meant, and the breakdown of the process. For example, did officers chase responses after seven days.
- Post complaint analysis – what happens if a complainant is not satisfied with their response.
- How the Council can prevent some of the complaints being asked in the first place.
- Have there been cases where complaints were closed too early before complainants are fully satisfied with the response they received.
- What targets had been set for complaints resolution for the year and in future years. Should a target of 90% performance be considered, for example.
- An explanation why the line graph in paragraph 11 in the report showed 'steep' gradients.
- How the Council is going to reflect on the complaints data over the past year and what it had learnt.
- The complexity of some complaints and that it can take a large amount of officer time to provide a response.

The Change and Digital Manager confirmed that no official targets were currently set for complaints, but setting targets for them is a future aim, and he will discuss with SLT.

The Change and Digital Manager also confirmed that to date, one complaint had been received about the Council Tax rebilling typo. He suggested to Members he could provide 1-2 case studies in future with the quarterly reports to help illustrate the work that goes into the management of the complaint.

Members discussed:

- The different ways to record response deadlines that had been missed, how many times this may have occurred and if how overdue they were could be incorporated.
- The number of complaints received due to residents not understanding council processes.
- Solving problems before they reach a complaint stage.
- What Members could do themselves to help residents, to prevent fewer complaints.

The Committee noted the Complaints Analysis report for Quarter 4, January–March 2023.

105 MULTI AGENCY FLOOD FORUM

The Chairman, who is also Chair of the Multi Agency Flood Forum updated members that the meeting on 20 March 2023 was well attended by most organisations.

He continued that it was noted there was a lack of attendance from Hampshire County Council Officers. This was reportedly due to staff illness at short notice.

The Chairman highlighted that a County Councillor had suggested the following sentence in the Minutes (4.2) be changed from:

- "Hawley Hill - It was reported that there was a lack of evidence around flooding, so smaller..."

To:

- "Hawley Hill - It was reported that there was a lack of proof that the failure of the balancing pond to collect water was adding to the flooding in Kingsway and Christchurch Drive, so smaller..."

The Chairman also reported that Hart's Flood Risk Management Officer had confirmed that waste removal at a ditch in Hartley Wintney is still being worked on with the relevant contractor and Fire Service.

This officer is also looking to re-engage more with the Parish Flood Forum.

The Committee noted the Minutes from the Multi Agency Flood Forum on 20 March 2023.

106 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Chairman highlighted that the officer who had written the report and no one else from the relevant team were present at the meeting and this would have been preferred.

The Executive Director – Community confirmed that the officer whose report it was is no longer at Hart.

Members discussed:

- The format of the report, which is different to previous years and the presentation of data.
- Whether the Risk Rating Table in Appendix A (page1) should have been split into two separate tables to appear clearer.
- The colour coding in the report and that it appeared to be inconsistent throughout Appendix A.

- The levels of risks and if there was cause for concern.
- How levels of risk are determined – reference was made to the Shapley Heath project.
- The table that displays the data for poor governance framework and how a moderate rating was determined for this when an Audit had occurred.
- The Climate Change Action Plan and it's delay.

Members questioned the information regarding 'failure to recruit or retain suitably skilled staff service continuity, delays in service provision to customers both external and internal' and reference was made to the Council's staff turnover rate over the past year, as this could have had an impact on risk ratings.

The Chairman questioned why an Excel spreadsheet of Risks that had been included in previous years reports and seen by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was not included this time and the Executive Director – Community agreed to review what additional information could be made to the Committee in the future.

The Committee noted the Corporate Risk Register.

107 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chairman presented his Annual Review report and thanked the Committee for all their input over the past year.

Members debated the wording of paragraph 5.1 relating to the Odiham Common Management Plan.

108 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

A Member had requested more information from the Executive Director – Corporate on the delegated decision:

To report to Cabinet as per Financial Regulation 10.34, debts >£5k written off as irrecoverable for the year 2022/23- totalling £99,459k for council tax and £92,115k for business rates. This will be met from the collection fund bad debt provision, not directly from the Council's budget.

The Chairman highlighted that the April items should have been removed from the Cabinet Work Programme and Committee Services agreed to look at this going forward.

109 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman highlighted that the feedback from the Conservation Area Task and Finish group is still outstanding. Members confirmed that the group are awaiting feedback from at least one Parish Council, with possibly a second wanting to get involved. This feedback is expected to be delivered in June.

The Executive Director – Community confirmed that a visit to the CCTV Headquarters in Runnymede for Overview and Scrutiny Members is being planned for the week beginning 5 June 2023 (daytime) and invitations will be sent shortly.

The Chairman requested that this CCTV visit be added as a separate item to the O&S Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 7.59 pm