

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 18 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Dorn (Chairman), Butcher, Coburn, Engström, Farmer, Harward and Vernon

In attendance:

Forster, Oliver, Radley

Officers:

Clark, Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Bennett, Digital, Customer & Change Manager

Rayne, Finance & Property Manager

Lord, Committee and Members Services Officer

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 20th June 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Dorn, Seconded Cllr Butcher and voted for unanimously.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Butler, Davies and Thomas.

Councillor Butler arranged for Councillor Delaney to substitute for her, but unfortunately Cllr Delaney had to also send her apologies

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Farmer declared an interest as the Chairman of Hart Swimming Club

16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that several members had attended some training the previous evening that had been very beneficial.

He informed the Members that the main points taken from the training were that Overview and Scrutiny could become more productive by:

- Utilising Task and finish groups
- By ensuring all questions and comments were relevant
- By asking for brief summaries of all papers
- By placing things on the work programme that would benefit residents, rather than solely looking at items that were going to Cabinet.

17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

18 COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR Q1

The Complaints report was introduced and various items highlighted:

- It was explained that Shared Services had been treated as a single entity rather than being included with in Corporate.
- Performance was similar across the service areas
- The anomaly rise in Place could be linked to the large percentage of new staff
- Lessons learned were being reported to the Operational Management Group
- The new feedback survey was in the process of being rolled out

The meeting thanked the officer for a clear and informative report, approving of the decision to separate out Shared Services, but asked that graphs showed a rolling 5 quarters to give a clearer picture of trends.

A query was raised around complaints made directly to and solved by Councillors. It was confirmed that when the new complaints systems was set up it was felt that informal complaints such as these should not be included in the statistics.

Discussion took place around KPIs and their value. The meeting was told that this issue had been discussed by the Senior Management Team and that it had been decided that it would be more beneficial to train and work with staff to improve the culture of how complaints were dealt with rather than to set KPIs.

19 CCTV

At the Committee's request the Portfolio holder gave an update on the CCTV service since the transition to the new provider.

The meeting was told that transition had gone well, with the exception of an issue around how out of hours calls were handled. However, this matter had now been resolved. It was also mentioned that the new service was impressed with the infra structure that was carried over to them, although it had some suggestions to make, most of them the Council was already aware of. This included the upgrade of 5 cameras which had already been ordered and would be installed by the end of the week.

There had been good feedback around the visit by O&S members to the unit.

Members were informed about several areas in which a marked improvement in the service had been seen:

- Maintenance – the new service had a much more responsive and active maintenance team, which meant issues were solved quickly. A query was raised around the lack of maintenance in the past, however assurance was given that maintenance had taken place, but not as quickly as it was being done now.
- Parts store – a parts store is being established at Rushmoor, as part lead times could delay the mending of cameras.
- Responsiveness – the new service were more responsive to change and this meant that changes to our requirements could happen swiftly to meet our needs.

The meeting was informed that their input into the review, that is on the work programme to come to O&S in December, would be welcomed. It was explained that the review would be including:

- How to improve the transparency of the KPIs, to ensure they reflected how the service meeting the needs of the council, and proving it was “Fit for Purpose”
- How to improve the links with the Police.

Discussion took place around whether the system was ‘proactive’ or ‘reactive’, this was linked to 2 events that had happened in Fleet recently. It was confirmed that the CCTV should not be seen as a replacement for the Police or security measures of individual premises. However, the meeting was assured that Runnymede operated at industry standard was regard to the ratio of operators to cameras monitored.

A query was raised around KPIs and whether they were showing the resilience of the control room or the robustness of the camera network. The Portfolio holder agreed that the KPIs were not transparent enough to give the information required and they would be part of the review.

The topic of Capital Reserves and how they could be used to improve the system was raised. It was felt that there were 3 areas that should be included in the review

- Should cameras in known hot spots be improved to give better resolution.
- Looking at Hart as a whole where would it be beneficial to add more cameras.
- How can the service now being provided by Runneymede be improved, for example by improving the working partnership with the police.

A comment was made that a request had been made by Elvetham Heath Parish Council to have 2 cameras installed at both the entrances to the estate. It was agreed that this could be investigated but there was a query around who would be funding the service. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that we would work with Town and parish councils but they would need to fund additions to the service.

It was felt that it would be of use to form a Task and Finish group to feed into the CCTV review process. It was explained that any group would have to feed into the report by September at the latest. The meeting agreed that this time scale could be met. To enable the members to meet this deadline it was agreed to form the group outside of the meeting. The group could then report back to Overview and Scrutiny in September.

Decision

To form a CCTV Task and Finish group to look at:

- Governance and monitoring going forward (so we avoid the past issues),
- a broader set of KPIs, monitoring how we measure and ensure value for money,
- strategies and suggestions for improvements to the service,
- ideas to encourage more police use and support to prosecutions.
- Expand scope, camera improvements, police engagement
- KPIs could be developed earlier

Proposed Cllr Dorn, Seconded Cllr Farmer voted unanimously.

Councillor Oliver left after this item.

20 SERVICE PANEL FEEDBACK - COMMUNITY

The O&S Chairman gave a report from the recent meeting. He highlighted the following items:

- It was a well-presented report with good outcomes from the Service across the board.
- It looked good, with the right amount of details. The Officer vignettes at front had good levels of detail, however it would be of benefit to also hear about the challenges.
- There were various comments on the Service priorities, however it was felt that these needed to be better aligned and coloured in line with RAG rating.
- It was felt that some of the items needed to be more specific about actions and outcomes.
- Fly tipping is being reviewed
- The Green Grid Strategy is delayed
- Work is continuing to improve Police awareness of CCTV, but more work was needed on KPIs and governance. A review planned for November.

Councillor Forster made a formal request that Members, who were not on the Overview and Scrutiny committee were allowed to attend the Service Panel Review meetings to ask questions and find out what is going on. The Chairman agreed to take this request to the Chief Executive and Executive Directors.

A query was raised about the “Concession Stands” at country parks mentioned in the report. It was confirmed that this referred to vans and stalls selling food and drinks.

Concern was raised about the “slippage” on the Green Grid Project and the timescale to deliver this. It was confirmed that a written report would be sent from the Executive Director for Communities.

Councillor Forster Left after this item.

21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN

The report was introduced by telling the meeting that the Revenue Outturn 22/23 showed an overall net underspend of £1.3 million. This change to the reported Q3 figure could mainly be attributed to a variety of one-off events that were laid out in the report.

There was discussion around this surplus and a query as to why it had not been found earlier. It was explained that the main reason was prudent budget setting and the diligence of officers to maximise savings. Also, many of the large changes had arisen at the end of the financial year.

The members were told that now that the finance function is carried out in house, it is easier to monitor events on a monthly basis and so large changes such as the £1.3million surplus will be seen sooner. Although, on this occasion the surplus had arisen mainly from fortuitous and unforeseen events.

Discussion took place around the continuing rise in interest and inflation rates. The members were told that the Council was protected last year due to fixed inflation but benefited from the rise in interest rates on investments, however the situation was being monitored closely this year.

A query was raised as to whether there was a better way to budget for capital projects, particularly profile over years. The meeting was told yes there was and that a review of how the Council budgeted was currently underway.

22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN

The meeting was told that the Treasury management report had been brought to the committee in line with current legislation and the council's approved strategy, it showed that the council was operating with-in the legal boundaries. It was commented that updates on Treasury Management would be included with in the Budget Monitoring reports in future.

It was explained that the council had a managed risk exposure.

A query was raised as to whether decisions about the investments were being taken having taken ethical ideals into consideration. The meeting was told that investment decisions now take into account the ethical guidelines previously decided upon by the Council and there would be a breakdown of these in the quarter 1 budget monitoring report.

A comment was made about the effect that a current bill going through Parliament would have on Local Councils ability to make Treasury Management decisions. Officers are keeping a watching brief on this.

23 REVIEW OF RESERVES INCLUDING SANGS FUNDING

This item was introduced to the meeting. It was explained that it is an 'Initial Review of Financial Reserves'. It was looking at having more flexibility with reserves and moving them around. The Members were told that the reserves within scope of this review currently stood at £47 million.

It was explained that the reserves were split into 4 sections.

1.General Fund Working Balance. Which currently stands at £8.3 million. It is acknowledged that this figure is too high and it is being reviewed so that a prudent minimum can be set. The report proposed a figure and use of the 22/23 underspend amount.

2. General Earmarked Reserves. Work is being done with the Executive Directors to align these funds better with current projects to relieve current pressures.

3. SANG Reserves. This reserve currently stands at £17 million. It was explained that the SANG Reserves are made up of money given to the council to be used for specific sites and that the money had to maintain the site for 80 years. It was confirmed that the Executive Director was confident that the reserves held enough, in the medium term, to support the sites to a level that was usable by the public, however, the funds were being reviewed. A number of actions were set out in the report.

4. Capital Reserves. The meeting was informed that most of the reserves from S106 payments and were related to Housing and Leisure and part of the budget process will be to work with Housing and Leisure on how to utilise the funds, to avoid having to repay them.

A query was raised around what would happen to the £1.3 million surplus. It was agreed that it should be dealt with prudently so that it could be used to benefit the budget for the Council and cover known one-off costs arising in the medium term.

It was requested that the report was updated before it went to Cabinet to include details of what assumptions had been made on SANG funds and a summary of the related risks.

24 CRIME AND DISORDER MEETING

The minutes of the recent meeting were noted by the committee.

25 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that in general all the items on the Cabinet work Programme were items that were mandatory. It was queried as to whether more items were going to be added. It was confirmed that yes there were more items in the pipeline. It was requested that these items be added, even without confirmed dates, so that Overview and Scrutiny could understand the plans of Cabinet.

26 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

It was announced to the meeting that following on from the training and a conversation with the Chief Executive, the Chairman wished to propose setting up of 2 Task and Finish groups. The 1st to look at the issue of “Fly Tipping” and the 2nd to look at the issue of “Short Term Traveller Pitches”. It was agreed that these were issues that Overview and Scrutiny should be looking into. The meeting agreed that Terms of Reference and councillor membership to these groups could be discussed outside of the meeting and any issued brought back

to the August meeting. Mr Clark offered to ensure that this course of action was in line with the constitution.

Decision

To form 2 Task and Finish Groups.

1. To look into the issue of Fly Tipping
2. To look into the issue of Short Term Traveller Pitches

Proposed by Cllr Dorn 2nd Cllr Coburn. Voted unanimous.

Discussion took place around the complaints report and as to whether the meeting needed to see it 4 times a year. It was agreed that provided it was being monitored by the Operational Management Group it only needed to be reviewed by the committee twice a year.

The meeting was informed that it is now a statutory requirement for them to undergo Treasury Management training. They were informed that this would probably take place in September over TEAMS.

Discussion took place around the value of inviting of South East Water to a future meeting to discuss the road closures. It was felt that this would be of value particularly if evidential feedback could be given around the disruption to residents and the quality of the work done.

The meeting closed at 8.59 pm