

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 14 November 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

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

In attendance:

Cockarill, Radley

Officers: Graeme Clark, Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Mark Jaggard, Executive Director - Place
Kirsty Jenkins, Executive Director - Community
Daniel Hawes, Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager
Christine Tetlow, Programme Manager
Rachael Wilkinson, Community Safety Coordinator
Claire Lord, Committee and Members Services Officer
Emma Evans, Committee and Member Services Officer

63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 17th October 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Dorn, Seconded Cllr Butler
Unanimous (Cllrs Butler and Forster abstained as not at the meeting)

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Coburn; Councillor Forster attended as a substitute.

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Forster declared an interest in item 11 as a Hampshire County Councillor.

66 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman updated the meeting on 3 on going issues.

Butterwood Homes – an email was sent to the housing company as discussed at the last O&S meeting. It was confirmed an update would be given in item 12 of the agenda.

On Street Parking – The meeting was told that an email had been sent to Hampshire County council and an informal reply had been received. The meeting was told that it was Hampshire Policy not to be scrutinised by other bodies within the Local Government system., however the members were encouraged to send their questions to the Hampshire Universal Services elect committee. The Chairman informed the meeting that he had been advised that Hampshire are keen to work with Hart on this matter.

The meeting was informed that the Hampshire control room was monitored so any parking issues should be reported and then if there was a CEO in the area they could be dispatched to investigate.

CCTV – The meeting was reminded that the report being produced by the O&S Task and Finish group was a different report to the one being produced by the Hart Officers, however one would feed into the other.

Cllr Thomas arrived during this item.

67 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

68 PRESENTATION BY CORE GRANT RECIPIENTS

A presentation was given by Citizens Advice Hart (CA). In it they reported that in the last year they saw 4,231 clients dealing with 6,684 issues, benefits and tax credits being the main issue. The meeting was told that there had been a dramatic increase in people seeking help as well as a shift in the demographic (from clients mainly being in the 50+ age range to being 35+). This increase had meant there had been a requirement to take on more staff.

The meeting was told about the various projects in the community that the CA was involved with including “Advice First Aid in the community” and about the difference the service makes to people’s lives.

A question was raised about how the CA was engaging with young people. The meeting was told that currently young people were not necessarily aware that the CA was there and available to them. However, this was something the team was looking into and had diversified the team to employ younger people to make the service more accessible for young people.

The CA was thanked for all the work that they do.

69 INTERIM REVIEW OF MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The item was introduced by explaining it was an Interim review and it was building a picture for the budget that would be presented in January, and that it showed how the actuals were tracking against budget for this year.

The meeting was told that provided the Government grant rolled forward the council should be able to again produce a balanced budget in 24/25.

It was highlighted that the main areas for concern were the high levels of inflation, the higher costs of waste and the potential for Central Government to review the amount of the grant.

It was confirmed that although there was currently a probable surplus of £1m for 23/24 and there was the potential to have a balanced budget 24/25, FY 25/26 may prove to be more challenging. The meeting was reassured that saving measures were already being considered.

A query was raised about the £250k saving and adjustments. It was explained that these were mainly made up of: -

- An increase in the Everyone Active Management fee
- Rental Income from Farnborough College
- The potential loss of income of planning and building control fees.

70 FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE PANEL MEMBERS - CORPORATE

The committee was told that it had been a very positive meeting.

It highlighted the positive financial situation and outlined the Electoral changes that were in the pipeline as well as the effect that the Waste Act will have on the service.

It was felt that the issues under Hart's control were running well and those not under Hart's were being mitigated for.

It was commented that now that the Climate change team was fully staffed that the action should be changed and a costed plan and timeline produced.

Concern was expressed around the risk relating to Waste/Recycling. It was queried as to whether the council should be formulating a plan to look at alternatives and possible cost reductions.

71 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - CYCLE AND CAR PARKING IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The report was introduced explaining that its purpose was to add structure to planning policy and that it would help to give weight to planning surrounding planning issues and climate concerns, looking at a shift to cycling.

The officers was praised for the quality of the report and how the consultations were run and how the feedback from these had been used to shape the final document.

Discussion took place around the standard dealing with parking. It was queried whether urban and rural areas should be dealt with separately. It was explained that this was a standard for the district and by dealing with the district as a whole there was more flexibility.

The meeting was told that the standard would become part of the Local plan and that by adopting it developers could be held more accountable.

72 OUTCOME OF TRIAL OF NEW PARKING MACHINES

The meeting was told that there had been a 3 month trial of a new touch screen parking machine in Victoria Road Car Park and that the trial showed that 96% of the residents surveyed found the new machine easier to use. The recommendation was being made to upgrade 22 of the parking machines to have the new touch screen.

Discussion took place around the cost of the new screens and their robustness. Against the issues with the current machines and the cost of repairing them.

A query was raised about what machines were being used by adjacent councils and what payment methods were being used by them. The meeting was told that many councils have moved over to payment by app only. However, the local demographic made this approach unsuitable for Hart. It was confirmed that the new machines would still take cash and card payments.

It was felt that before the new machines were ordered an equalities assessment to include suitability for the visually impaired should take place.

73 LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

The report was introduced and it was explained that this was a high-level document which provides a solid high-level strategy that will help the council move into the design stage. The meeting was informed that the report had been produced in conjunction with Hampshire County Council.

The meeting was told that this was a report that was trying to create a modal shift from driving to cycling or walking. It had identified origins and destinations and was offering radical solutions.

The meeting expressed many concerns about the document: -

- That the document contained many specific design details. This led to concern that it was only these details that would be considered going forward and that many other good and more practical solutions would be overlooked.
- That some of the routes suggested, although attractive would be discounted as impractical once they were presented to the Highways Authority. It was confirmed that the Highways Authority had been involved in the selection process and that the solutions in the document were ones put forward by Highways.
- That feedback from the consultation stages had not been taken into consideration. It was agreed that an analysis of the feedback received would be beneficial.
- That when funding was being sort that, it would only be sort for the items in the report, some of which the members felt were either impractical or undeliverable.
- That if the funding and focus was on the larger more impractical items the smaller more deliverable items in the report may be overlooked.

It was that a clear statement was added to the report stating that the routes contained in it were not the final decision and that there would be an opportunity in the future to have input into the various routes.

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny committee has deep concerns about the report in its current form and that it would encourage a review of the document in conjunction with feedback. There should be consideration of what further work is required and by whom (officers or councillors).

74 BUTTERWOOD HOMES SCRUTINY PANEL REPORT

Ms Jenkins left the room at this point as she is a director of Butterwood homes.

The Scrutiny Panel explained that since the last meeting, financial figures had been received. Sadly, the original figures were not the ones required and the required figures had only been received last week. Therefore, although the report had been written it had not been reviewed by the whole panel and so was not ready to bring before the members.

The Panel expressed disappointment in the whole process however, it was confirmed that the situation had been resolved and would not happen again.

75 CCTV TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The members of the group stated that they still had more work to do and would report back to O&S next month.

76 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members were reminded that the feedback from the O&S Task and Finish group on CCTV would have to be ready to go, to feed into the report going to Cabinet in January.

77 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

It was confirmed that the Butterwood Homes report should be added to the work programme in December.

The meeting closed at 9.19 pm