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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 JULY 2016

Present: Councillors Webb (Chair), Howard, Bacon, Batsford, Charman, Cooke, Dowling, Patmore, Rankin and Turner

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Wincott

7. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Interest
Cooke	Personal – his son is a student at a local academy
Bacon	Personal – he used to be employed by an academy chain
Rankin	Personal - his son is a student at a local academy. One of the academy sponsors is known to him.
Turner	Personal – his grandson is a student at a local academy

8. **UPDATE ON 2015-16 WORK PROGRAMME AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016-17**

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented an update on the overview and scrutiny work programme 2015/16. Members had completed the areas of work they had identified as a high priority, including a review of digital inclusion and community safety. Members had also formed a task and finish group to consider the impact on higher education provision in the town of a decision by the University of Brighton to close its campus in Hastings. The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager noted that this group would receive a further update at an appropriate time.

Throughout 2015/16 members had also reviewed the structure of the council's overview and scrutiny function. Following the recommendations of overview and scrutiny members, the council had adopted a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee, combining the responsibilities of the previous Services and Resources committees, from May 2016. Members agreed to form a team to review the new arrangements as part of their quarter 2 activities. Councillors Charman, Howard, Patmore, Rankin and Turner agreed to be part of this review team.

The committee considered the recommendations of the Chair and Vice Chair on priority areas for consideration as part of the 2016/17 work programme. Members were mindful that the council would continue to implement its organisational transformation programme over the next year, by reviewing working practices and exploring new opportunities for income generation to address the significant financial

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challenges it continued to face. The committee was keen to meet with the Leader and Deputy Leader at an early stage to better understand the corporate prioritising and planning process that would be taking place over the coming months to help inform the production of the corporate plan and budget for 2018/19. Members were also keen to understand how learning from the use of base budgeting as part of the recent cleaning contract procurement process could be applied in future.

Members would also receive an update at quarter 3 on how the application of IT packages, including blockchain technologies, could assist the council's transformation intentions. The committee acknowledged that this was in line with the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Digital Inclusion, which had been undertaken as part of the 2015/16 work programme. Councillors Dowling, Patmore and Howard also agreed to form a task and finish group to test the council's new website.

Consideration was given to the implementation of the recommendation of an earlier scrutiny review, which had investigated how the council could work more closely with local schools. Members were advised that a task and finish group of education and non-education partners, chaired by the Leader of the Council, had met at the end of 2015. The task and finish group had recommended examining options to recruit key works to the area. Since then, efforts had been underway with a range of partners in the public and private sector to explore an opportunity for partnership working to support the recruitment and retention of staff.

Discussion took place regarding the impact of the recent referendum decision to leave the European Union. Members were mindful that this decision could potentially affect both community cohesion and the level of external funding available to the town. The committee were keen to receive an update on the impact on community cohesion at quarter 1, but acknowledged the full details of the position on EU-funded projects may not be available until later in the year.

The Chair and Vice Chair were also keen that committee members receive an update on the legacy of events planned to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings to the town's broader cultural regeneration efforts. Members were also wished to be kept updated on plans as part of their performance monitoring role. On the advice of the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, it was agreed to hold this update later in the year than originally planned.

The Chairs and Vice Chair also recommended that the committee receive an update from the newly appointed Planning Services Manager on the outcome of her review of this service. In the meantime, members would continue to monitor performance through their quarterly updates.

As part of their work programme activities in previous years, members had received updates on the waste and street cleansing arrangements. Members were keen to continue to monitor this issue and would seek advice from the Director of Operational Services and Assistant Director, Environment and Place, as to the timing and format of an additional update.

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Councillor Dowling highlighted plans to close the Crown Post Office in St Leonards and suggested this may be a matter for overview and scrutiny to consider further.

RESOLVED that the annual meeting agree the key lines of inquiry proposed for the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2016/17 municipal year

The reason for this decision was:

It is the responsibility of members serving on overview and scrutiny to set their own work programme for each municipal year at the annual meeting, whilst taking into account the advice of officers present.

9. **INVITATION TO LEAD MEMBERS FOR 2016/17**

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager asked for the committee's approval to invite Lead Members to the quarterly overview and scrutiny performance monitoring committees for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED that Lead Members be formally invited to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for 2016/17 municipal year

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.00 pm)

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