

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES  
21 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillors Poole (in the Chair), Cooke, Davies, Rogers and Turner

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch, Forward, Kramer and Westley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gurney and Chowney

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors made no declarations of interest at the meeting.

**17. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2013 be approved as a true record.**

**18. QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer presented a report to advise Members of performance against the 2013/14 targets and performance indicators in Part II of the Corporate Plan. The report also provided a summary of financial information.

Discussion took place regarding the new merged Waste Services and Off Street Parking Team. Councillor Kramer had recently accompanied the team on patrol; and was impressed by their work. She noted that a vacancy on the team was still outstanding. Members reiterated that the results of enforcement action should be adequately publicised, to highlight the robust action taken by the Council to maintain and improve the 'streetscene'. The committee suggested that the Head of Environmental Services investigate whether a-boards regarding recent prosecutions could be introduced in affected areas.

Members were advised that the preliminary assessment of the 2013 local place survey results showed that satisfaction with street cleanliness had reduced. The next independent street cleanliness survey was due later in the year. The Council usually performed well in these surveys and compared favourably to other authorities. The committee noted that the Council had worked to maintain a high standard of street cleanliness for a number of years, and suggested further efforts to address public perception of this issue.

The committee discussed community safety issues. In particular, members noted the importance of partnership working with other agencies to address these issues. A Community Safety Hub had been developed at Aquila House,

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES 21 NOVEMBER 2013

which allowed for greater collaborative working between the Council, the police and Amicus Horizon. Consideration was given to the use of CCTV cameras to tackle anti social behaviour. The Director of Regeneration had recently presented a report to Cabinet on plans to upgrade the Council's CCTV system. The committee were mindful of evidence that CCTV facilities impacted on reductions in crime and improved public assurance. Members noted that efforts to tackle anti social behaviour were complimented by the Council's reduce the strength campaign, which had been launched in October and aimed to limit the sale of certain high strength alcohol products. Members requested updated information on the number of premises which had signed up to the scheme to date.

The committee congratulated officers involved with delivering future subsidies for Hastings Country Park, by securing a countryside stewardship agreement with Natural England. The committee noted that there were potholes in the road at the entrance to the Country Park car park and requested that the Lead Member for Leisure and Amenities investigate having these repaired.

Members noted that significant savings had been achieved under the new grounds maintenance and arboriculture contracts, by working in partnership with Rother District Council and Amicus Horizon.

Following a request from Members, the Director of Environmental Services agreed to investigate the provision of dropped curbs in the West Marina area with East Sussex County Council.

Members noted that the Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure continued to support the Falaise indoor bowlers in exploring funding opportunities to improve their facilities.

The committee highlighted the excellent events which had taken places over the summer, as part of the Stade Saturday's cultural programme. The Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy advised that planning was underway for next years programme, which would include the involvement of local community groups.

Discussion took place regarding the Council's efforts to bring neglected and derelict buildings back into use. Members were advised that East Sussex County Council had recently sold a number of vacant properties in the Gillsmans Hill area. The committee requested that the Head of Housing and Planning Services investigate a vacant site in Fairlight Road.

Members noted that the Council had recently adopted a new Homelessness Strategy for Hastings and St Leonards. The strategy set out a range of measures the Council would take over the next two years, to tackle homelessness. A new scheme had also been introduced to assist those at risk of becoming homeless, following their discharge from hospital. The Head of Housing and Planning Services noted that levels of homelessness were

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES  
21 NOVEMBER 2013**

heavily affected by the wider economic climate. The team would also continue to monitor the impact of the welfare reforms on the town.

The Head of Marketing and Communications noted that a revised bid for funding to refurbish the visitor facilities at Hastings Castle would be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in December.

**RESOLVED – (unanimously) - that:**

- 1. the committee's comments on Quarter Two performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back, and;**
- 2. staff in the Environmental Services and Regeneration Directorates be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter.**

**19. UPDATE ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW "IS HASTINGS MAKING THE MOST OF BEING A UNIVERSITY TOWN?"**

Councillor Howard, as Chair of the Scrutiny review, presented an update on a follow up meeting between the Council, University faculty and representatives of the local business community. He noted that the meeting had been well attended and had provided a useful opportunity for the Council to facilitate increased communication between the University and local businesses.

The committee welcomed the update and highlighted the importance of improvements to higher education to the wider regeneration of the town.

**20. UPDATE ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HASTINGS CASTLE FUTURE MANGEMENT OPTIONS**

Councillor Rogers, as Chair of the Scrutiny Review, presented an update on a follow up meeting to review the 2013 summer season at Hastings Castle and the impact of a new adventure ticket on visitor numbers. She noted that, whilst the adventure ticket had not significantly increased visitor numbers to Castle, it did provide a useful opportunity for joint working with Blue Reef. The review team recommended that the adventure ticket continue in 2014. The Head of Marketing and Communications would draft a short questionnaire, which would be issued to customers at the point of sale, and enable the review team to better understand the impact of the ticket. The review team would be reconvened next year, to evaluate the 2014 summer season.

The committee noted the update and supported the review team's recommendation to continue the adventure ticket for the 2014 summer season.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES  
21 NOVEMBER 2013**

**21. FORWARD PLAN NOVEMBER 2013 TO FEBRUARY 2014 AND  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14  
QUARTER TWO UPDATE**

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer introduced this item. He advised that Members had commenced two reviews, which had been selected at the Annual Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny reviews in June. A draft Overview and Scrutiny Charter, which had been formulated by a working group of Members, was also nearing completion.

Member's views were sought on items contained within the Forward Plan, which detailed reports to be considered by Cabinet over the coming months.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.03pm)