

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JUNE 2016

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

Lead Members in attendance Councillors Cartwright, Chowney, Davies, Forward and Poole

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared their interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Interest
Cartwright	Personal - he is a member of the West St Leonards Police Panel
Rankin	Personal - he runs a property company in the town and is a member of the North St Leonards Police Panel
Webb	Personal – he is Vice Chair of East Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care and Community Safety Committee and East Sussex County Council's representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board

2. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2016, OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2016 AND THE JOINT BUDGET OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Services meeting held on 9 February 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Resources meeting held on 11 February 2016 and the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 January 2016 be approved as a correct record

3. CORPORATE PLAN PART III - YEAR END PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND TARGET SETTING 2016/17

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance presented a report which advised members of the year-end actual performance against key activities set out in the corporate plan for 2015/16. The report also considered areas of shortfall in performance and actions that would be taken to improve performance in 2016/17.

The Director of Corporate Services updated members on achievements within her directorate during the last quarter and performance over the whole year. She commented that all staff had coped well during the refurbishment of Aquila House, which had created significant disruption throughout the past year, and continued to

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deliver an ambitious programme of activities. The council has also delivered a range of projects as part of its ongoing organisational transformation programme.

The briefing also highlighted key areas of work outside the targets set out in the corporate plan, including the transfer of civic functions from the Town Hall to Aquila House and the lease of space at the Town Hall to East Sussex County Council for use as a Register Office.

The Electoral Services team were also undertaking additional tasks in preparation for the Referendum in June 2016, alongside assisting with the Boundary Review.

Members acknowledged ongoing uncertainty regarding the implementation of Universal Credit and would continue to monitor this throughout the year ahead.

The Director of Operational Services briefed members on performance across his Directorate. He advised that the Planning Services Manager would update members on her review of the services. Members were mindful that the review had taken place in the context of a challenging budget setting process facing the council as well as changes to the government assessment process for planning matters.

The Director of Operational Services commented that performance of the waste and street cleansing contract remained broadly in line with the council's performance indicators, however, the council continued to work closely with the contractor to address areas for improvement. He noted that a number of the challenges experienced in Hastings had been shared by other authorities within the partnership.

The briefing also highlighted a number of significant achievements over the past year. In particular the work between the council, East Sussex County Council and the Source to secure the refurbishment of the former White Rock Baths as a BMX and skate park. Members noted a number of significant improvements to the White Rock area, with the completion of the restoration of Hastings Pier and the refurbishment of Bottle Alley.

The Director of Operational services also highlighted a successful example of partnership working between a range of agencies to ensure the bathing water at Hastings beach met the new EU standard. This approach had secured significant investment from Southern Water to improve the sewerage infrastructure within the town and a new filtration system had been implemented in Alexandra Park. A successful community engagement campaign, Clean Seas Please, had also been undertaken by the local voluntary sector.

Members requested a site visit to the council's new CCTV control room. The Director of Operational Services commented that investment in the new equipment by the council had significantly improved the effectiveness of the CCTV coverage. He added that this resource was important to support the continued regeneration of the town and attract investment to the area, particularly as plans were developed for a new high education offer.

The Director of Operational Services updated members on the Social Lettings Agency. Interest in the agency continued to grow, with 29 properties now included in the

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scheme, which was near the break-even point. Members had recently received a briefing on trends within the local housing market, and the potential impact this could have on the council's commitments to address homelessness. Members requested that the committee requested that they continue to be kept updated as to the number of homelessness applications and acceptances received each quarter. Consideration was given to the impact of a new government pilot of changes to social housing; members were due to receive a briefing from AmicusHorizon on changes to their rent policy.

The committee discussed the implementation of the Firmstep for online enquiries to the council. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance advised that the new system would enable the council to gather further information about the enquiries it receives, which could help support further service improvements.

Member's views were sought on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17.

The committee welcomed the proposed new performance indicator targets to measure the effectiveness of the council's website. The new targets reflected the council's channel shift intentions and included the percentage of customers registered for a self-service account and monitoring the increase in the number of customers self-serving online.

Members supported proposals to reduce the target for the percentage of statutory noise nuisance and public health complaints responded to within 5 working days from 95% in 2015.16 to 90% in 2016/17. This is because of an anticipated significant increase in the number of scheduled food safety inspections, which will impact on capacity within the environmental health team.

Discussion took place regarding potential options to increase attendance at the White Rock Theatre. The Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture advised that the council was in contact with the current theatre operator to explore options to improve the facilities, when the existing contract has come to an end.

The committee discussed whether the proposed target for visitor numbers to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery of 45,000 in 2016/17 was too high, as the target for 2015/16 had not been met. The Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture explained that visitor numbers over the past year had been affected by works to the storage area at the museum, which had limited capacity for special exhibitions and private views. The works to the storage area have now been completed and the number of schools visits had already significantly increased. It was therefore considered that the proposed target for visitor numbers was achievable

Members noted the target for total attendances at council Leisure Centres and potential options to encourage use of the facilities.

The committee were mindful of a significant increase in the number of homelessness acceptances over the past year, and noted that this trend may continue in 2016/17. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing, Communications and Equalities

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portfolio holder acknowledged these concerns, she also highlighted the extensive work the council was undertaking to support homelessness preventions.

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance gave members an update presentation on the council's organisational transformation programme. She highlighted key work packages which had been undertaken over the past year and efforts to engage all staff in the transformation process.

The committee thanked all staff for their efforts and achievements throughout the year.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -

- 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thank staff for their hard work in achieving those key activities set out in the corporate plan;**
- 2. The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17 be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 4 July 2016, and;**
- 3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to assist the council pilot new ways of presenting performance during 2016/17 in line with the changes from two to one Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The reason for this decision was:

To assist with the approval process for the corporate plan and assist Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to undertake their performance management role.

4. FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DIGITAL INCLUSION

The Sustainability Policy Officer presented the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Digital Inclusion.

The review had been undertaken as part of the 2015/16 overview and scrutiny work programme, it had focused on key aspects of the council's organisational transformation, including the My Hastings online and digital by design work packages. Members noted that providing access to services online improved flexibility for customers and identified potential cost savings for the council.

Members were keen to understand the facilities and resources available to support residents accessing services online. The review team mapped access to free Wi-Fi, public access computers and training opportunities to develop computer skills. It was noted that a range of organisations in the private and voluntary sectors had carried out activities to support digital inclusion, as an increasing number of services were made available online. The review had also examined capacity within the organisation to continue to support people who would be unable or unwilling to access services online.

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Members thanked all those who had contributed to the review.

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the Director of Corporate Services and Governance's report be agreed

The reason for this decision was:

A team of overview and scrutiny members have been undertaking a review of digital inclusion as part of their 2015/16 work programme, which is a key part of the council's broader organisational transformation programme.

5. FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Director of Operational Services presented the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Community Safety.

The review had been undertaken in the context of reduced budgets and changes to service provision for a variety of agencies with community safety responsibilities, including Hastings Borough Council, the Police and East Sussex County Council. Members were aware that supporting community safety was an important part of the council's broader regeneration ambitions for the town.

The review team noted that a number of agencies had worked in partnership over recent years to deliver a series of interventions which had resulted in a significant drop in the number of reported crimes and improved community safety. However, members were mindful that the social conditions in many parts of the town had remained relatively unchanged, and it was therefore possible that trends in community safety which had damaged the reputation of the town in the past may re-emerge if resources are withdrawn from these interventions.

Members had considered changes to the Sussex Local Policing model, the review team had supported a proposed pilot between the Hastings and Rother crime reduction partnerships to reflect the structure of the new policing district.

The review team had expressed concern at reductions to funding for the SeaView project and recommended that the council continue to highlight the work of this charity in supporting vulnerable people.

The committee thanked all those who had contributed to the review.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1. The committee support the review team's recommendations, and;**
- 2. The committee thank those involved in this review**

The reason for this decision was:

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To consider the outcomes and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Community Safety which was undertaken as part of the 2015/16 work programme.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 YEAR END UPDATE

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented a year-end update on the 2015/16 overview and scrutiny work programme, he commented that members had completed all of the pieces of work they had identified as a high priority for this year.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 8.39 pm)