

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 FEBRUARY 2018

Present: Councillors Howard (Vice-Chair), Bacon, Charman, Cooke, Turner, Davies and Dowling

Apologies for lateness were given for Councillor Webb

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Rankin, Atkins and Cartwright

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2018 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

22. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3 2017/18

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance, and Director of Operational Services jointly provided an update on performance against the targets set out in the corporate plan for 2017/18, and other key activities, during quarter 3 as well as a summary of financial information.

Questions were raised about targets in the report relating to composts, and whether this was an addition to the most recent reports. The Director of Operational Services stated that he would find out for the committee.

Discussion took place in regards to dog fouling and whether there were locations where dog fouling was more frequent. Councillor Fitzgerald, Environment and Equalities Portfolio Holder replied that there were more frequent areas of dog fouling. This information was said to be accessible due to the GPS tracking that wardens are provided with. A further question was asked on how many Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been paid. It was agreed that the Director of Operational services would provide further information on FPNs in writing.

The committee discussed the future on the Stamco Brownfield Site. It was noted that the site is planned to be developed by a company in the close future. Furthermore, it was noted that temporary accommodation in the area could be possible, due to the area being a mixture of commercial and residential which makes it suitable.

Discussion took place in regards to the White Rock area. Members asked if there were any targets that they could see that related to the White Rock area. Councillor Forward, the Regeneration and Culture Portfolio Holder, offered to provide the figures after the meeting. Furthermore, questions were raised in regards to whether the council would continue to subsidize the White Rock Theatre. The reply was that there were plans for the White Rock area to turn in to a more suitable attraction and that redevelopment was planned in the local area.

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Members raised the issue of homelessness, and the use of temporary accommodation as well as the focus on preventative measures. It was stated that one of the measures taken was to put long term empty properties back in to use.

The committee raised a question about the Hastings Housing Company, and which properties were to be acquired. It was mentioned that there was one major acquisition in progress. The strategy for the Hastings Housing Company was stated to be a focus on 1980s houses, as they were deemed to be the most suitable for the needs of the company. Furthermore, the strategy aims to provide both stable accommodation for residents, and income generation for the town. Another question that was raised was about how properties were identified. It was noted that an employee was in place to identify properties for acquisition.

Members were updated on an ongoing planning issue with a nearby local authority, and were given an update on the steps being taken to address it.

An inquiry was made in to the lease arrangements for units in Priory Meadow. It was noted that there was an increase in rental costs, however the demand for units inside the shopping centre had still been high.

The issue of Non-Domestic Rates changing was raised. It was noted that Hastings Borough Council is one of the only authorities that still possesses a one hundred percent council tax reduction for the most disadvantaged in the community.

A question was raised about the progress of the online self-service MyHastings and the marketing campaign, and whether the council would hit targets for online usage. It was mentioned there was a delay with the advertisement company, however Facebook advertisements were well received and targets would most likely be met.

The committee discussed the issue of 'cuckooing' (whereby drug dealers take over homes of vulnerable drug users to use as a base for supplying drugs) and whether police disruption in the area was satisfying to the council. It was stated that continued dialogue with the police, including the Metropolitan Police due to the origin of some criminals, was vital to tackling this issue. The importance of child protection and adult social services to be in place for the vulnerable was stated. The effects of funding cuts to the police were noted to be a factor in the effectiveness of police disruption of criminal activity, however it was said that despite this the police currently seem to have control over the situation. The committee agreed partner cooperation was important in this issue.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The committees comments on quarter 3 performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back, and;**
- 2. Staff be thanked or their hard work and achievements in this quarter.**

The reason for this decision was:

To assist the council in undertaking performance management arrangements.

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**23. UPDATE ON THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
2017/18**

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager gave an update on the work programme for 2017/18 in quarter 3. It was stated that the programme is on track. The recent Scrutiny Steering Group was successful, and had discussed the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Furthermore, the education review was on track, however it was noted there would be an interim report in Quarter 4. This review could see new members on the group, should the new committee wish to take this work forward.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.16 pm)