OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors Turner, Webb (Chair), Rankin, Barnett, Beaney, Cox, Evans and Foster

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Charman, Davies and Battley

38.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Webb	4 – Performance and Financial Monitoring for 2018/19 – Quarter 2	Personal – He is a Councillor at East Sussex County Council

39.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 September 2018 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

40.   PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING FOR 2018/19 - QUARTER 2

Mark Horan, Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented a report on the performance and financial monitoring for 2018/19 in quarter 2. The Director of Operational Services and Director of Corporate Services & Governance brought the group through the report.

The group raised a question in regards to the use of reserves, and whether there was a fixed amount of reserves to be used, or if there were more flexible use of the reserves to cover spending. They asked if this was agreed at the beginning of the year, if it was earmarked. The answer was that a prediction was agreed at the beginning of the year when the books were balanced.

A question about the terms "underspend" and "overspend", and what these terms meant. The answer was that an underspend meant that less money than predicted was spent in a certain area, whilst an overspend meant that more than predicted was spent. A "favourable overspend" meant that more money than predicted was spent, but for the better of the service. The group agreed that this terminology was not as accurate as it could be.

An issue in regards to the presentation of information on the report with graphs was raised. The answer was that this is the way that it must be presented as instructed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).

A question was raised on the overspend of homelessness accommodation, and what had caused it. The answer was that due to the homelessness act, more temporary

accommodation needed to be provided. As it was a "bidders market", it was stated that the prices of B&Bs had been rising, making this more expensive to provide accommodation. However, with the start of the housing first scheme, it was stated that the numbers of rough sleepers had fallen.

The group asked about the underspend on the warden service, and what had caused this. It was stated that currently was difficult to increase the team to full strength, but at the time of the meeting, numbers were not available. It was agreed that these numbers could be clarified.

A question was raised in regards to the Prince 2 training, and whether these project management tools were being used in the project management of the council for instance with the use of milestones. The answer was that it was currently being applied to projects, but for the first time.

The group raised a query around the sickness and whether the upward trend in work absences and sickness was due to any particular reason. The answer was that at this time, illness was more common due to the cold weather, and that stress and mental health issues were more prominently spoken about and tackled more openly. Furthermore, the stressful environment the council was currently facing had an effect on the levels of stress in the organisation. Overall, it was stated that this was a holistic problem, with many different factoring issues. Return-to-work schemes and mental health support had been helpful in making sure that staff could return to work and carry on benefitting the organisation in a positive way that was not negative on their health.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were discussed, and it was said that the amount of them issued was quite little, with 9 over 9 months. It was asked why this was the case. Nine staff members, split between many different duties meant that they would not always be around to issue the PSPOs.

A question was raised as to the effectiveness on Playdays, and where it was being targeted. The answer was that any information would be gathered for the group, but that there wasn't as much targeted recently, and it was attempting to be boundary neutral.

The group discussed the metrics for measuring success in growth. The answer to their questions was that these metrics would develop next year, yet this was a difficult task to develop the outcome for change.

The changes regeneration were making was currently stated to be successful, however it was possible that business could commit more to the regeneration of the town.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Webb, which was seconded by Councillor Rankin.

RESOLVED that:

1. That the committees comments on 2018/19 performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back

2. That staff be thanked for their hard work and achievements

41. UPDATE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Mark Horan, Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19. He stated that the workplan was on track, and the topic of waste and the DSO would be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Quarter 3.

It was stated that the review for Single Use Plastics would be making their recommendations to Cabinet now, as the review had been completed. The group were happy with the presentations on Community Safety and Housing, and there were no further lines of enquiry.

In regards to the item on Online Only Services, there were still some questions to be asked in the future by the group.

The group noted that the review on the Community Coastal Fund was still in progress, with some more lines of enquiry, as well as the review on Section 106. Officers were still collecting information for this review.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm)