

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 JULY 2023

Present: Councillors Patmore (Chair), Sinden (Vice-Chair), Bacon, Carr, Cooke, Foster, Hay, Hilton, Roberts and Webb

Officers: Coral Harding

146. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor Turner

147. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Cllr Webb	4,5,6	Personal – ESCC Councillor
Cllr Hay	4,5,6	Personal – ESCC Councillor
Cllr Hilton	4,5,6	Personal – ESCC Councillor

148. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12/07/23

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2023 be approved as a true record.

149. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE 2023-24 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chair explained that there will be four key areas. Finance lead by Councillor Patmore, Equalities lead by Councillor Carr, Living Environment lead by Councillor Hilton and Follow up lead by Councillor Sinden.

The Chair explained how a meeting is to be planned to discuss the LGA Peer review. It is hoped to have further updates on homelessness and temporary accommodation with a meeting to be planned in August with the Housing Manager. Councillor Webb requested to be in the Finance working group. Councillor Carr proposed the Equalities working group will be open to all Councillors and not just member of overview and Scrutiny. The Chair agreed with the proposal. A meeting is to be planned to discuss tourism with the retiring Marketing and Major Projects Manager. Councillors discussed the need for follow up meetings. The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Officer explained there will be follow up meetings throughout

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the year. The Chair explained the plan is to start meeting with Senior staff and Portfolio holders earlier this year.

The Councillors discussed plans to have a smart sheet completed to be able to review targets. The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Officer explained a Smartsheet will be created and the plans for the year shared with Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet. The Chair explained Cabinet Portfolio holders will be requested to be at Overview and Scrutiny meetings and to answer questions rather than officers asking questions.

Resolved (Unanimously)

That the Annual Meeting reach agreement on their key lines of inquiry for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year

Reasons

It is the responsibility of members serving on the Overview and Scrutiny committee to set their own work programme for each municipal year at the Annual Meeting.

150. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair as the Lead on the finance working group explained there was a meeting held to discuss the asset management plan. It will be requested to have a briefing with the Chief Finance officer to explain what section 114 would mean for the Council. The recommendations have been updated for all Councillors to now receive specialist training and briefings. Councillors discussed the need for a cross party working group regarding asset management. The chair explained how asset management is to be reviewed again in the coming year.

The Committee discussed whether there will be a need to call in the LGA Peer review which is going to cabinet. The Chair explained a meeting is to be planned with Lead members to discuss the LGA Peer review. The group discussed not receiving regular updates from the Chief Finance Officer which had been requested. The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Officer explained every month there should be a financial monitoring report for Cabinet which can be reviewed. There should also be a Quarterly report for Overview and Scrutiny. The committee discussed there shouldn't be a need to dig for answers and the committee should be better informed.

The group discussed the need for pre scrutiny which would be inline with other Councils. The Chair explained there are plans to review the Budget earlier this year. The group highlighted the need to have a meeting with Lead members and Senior Leadership team to discuss pre scrutiny. The Chair explained that a trial will be held for an item coming to Cabinet in September or October. The group discussed the Housing Strategy could be an item where Overview and Scrutiny could pre scrutinise.

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Councillor Carr updated the Equalities meetings were well attended through the previous year and will continue into the next year reviewing internal practices and how the Council relates with local groups. The Equalities Charter will be discussed at the next LSP meeting as members expressed concerns regarding the charter and the failure to have meetings with the portfolio holder. There will be a review of the Park Safety Project and the impact on crime figures early next year.

The Chair gave thanks to Councillor Jobson for the work she completed last year. This work will continue, and a letter is soon to be sent to Southern Water requesting them to attend a meeting with the committee. The Chair highlighted the need to review the Climate change delivery plan and for a way to measure the climate change targets.

Resolved (Unanimously)

1. Finance review group recommends the following;

- a) Councillors to receive specialised financial training and briefings**
- b) Councillors to receive briefings when requested on decisions with financial implementations.**
- c) Overview and Scrutiny to identify pre decision scrutiny opportunities for involvement and development**

2. Equalities review group recommends the following;

- a) Overview and Scrutiny to review the Park Safety Project**
- b) Equalities Working Group to continue meet and investigate lines of enquiry**

3. Living Environment review group recommends the following;

- a) Overview and Scrutiny to invite Southern Water for discussions about their future plans for the town**
- b) Overview and Scrutiny to review the use of My Hastings by residents**
- c) Overview and Scrutiny to review Climate Change delivery plan**

4. Follow up theme review group recommends the following;

- a) Motions constitutional reform requesting 6 monthly reports to Full Council be reviewed and agreed.**
- b) Overview and Scrutiny to review Sea Change's past and future activities in the borough**

Reasons

1. The council's financial situation requires critical decision making by councillors. The committee would like to see this skill set enhanced. They believe early intervention in key decisions will lead them to be more robust and resilient.

2. The Park Safety Project responded to public needs. A review will ensure these are still being met. The Equalities Working Group have identified further areas of opportunity and development.

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3. The living environment in our borough needs to be clean and healthy to promote good health and wellbeing. It is important that the public see the council actively pursue this.

4. It is important that key parts of previous work programmes are followed up and finalised.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 6.57 pm)