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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES

11 JUNE 2015

Present: Councillors Westley (Chair), Fitzgerald, Turner, Charman, Edwards and Lee

Lead Members in Attendance: Councillors Chowney, Davies, Forward and Poole

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillor Scott

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Minute Number	Interest
Westley	3	Personal – she is employed by East Sussex County Council

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2015 AND THE JOINT BUDGET OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015 and the minutes of the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2015 be approved as a correct record

3. CORPORATE PLAN PART III - YEAR END PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND TARGET SETTING 2015/16

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer presented the report which outlined year-end performance against the targets and milestones set out in part II of the corporate plan for 2014/15, the report also set out actions that would be taken in 2015/16 to address any areas of shortfall. The committee's views were sought on the proposed performance indicators for 2015/16.

Discussion took place regarding changes to the way crimes are recorded by the police. Members acknowledged that accurate data on crime was essential to informing the council's approach to supporting community safety. The Assistant Director for Environment and Place advised that alcohol related crime had been reduced significantly as a result of a range of initiatives by the council and its partners, including the reduce the strength campaign.

Consideration was given to the arrangements for the waste and street cleansing contract with Kier Services. The Lead Member for Environment, Leisure and Amenities advised that the next Joint Waste Committee was due to receive update reports on recycling, efforts to improve streetscene and staffing arrangements across the contract. The Assistant Director for Environment and Place explained that officers in the council's waste team continued to monitor performance closely and applied rectifications where necessary to ensure the contractual requirements were met. The Leader of the Council commented that the recent launch of My Hastings Online would

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make it easier for residents to report waste and streetscene issues directly to the council's contractor.

Members noted that specialist contractors had temporarily been recruited to enable the council to carry out food hygiene inspections, due to staff shortages within the team. The council had completed 95% of its scheduled inspections for the year; the team also offered advice on food safety requirements to new businesses. The Assistant Director for Environment and Place advised that the department had since been restructured, and the staff vacancies filled, which should reduce the need to employ specialist contractors in the future.

The Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure advised that the council was working in partnership with the Environment Agency and East Sussex County Council to review the Bulverhythe Flood Plan, and extend the flood prevention measures to cover the whole town.

Discussion took place regarding attendance at the White Rock Theatre performances; the council had exceeded its target for March 2015 achieving audience figures of 76,743. The Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure highlighted that this was largely due to better than expected attendance at the Christmas Pantomime. The committee recommended that the year end target for March 2016 should be increased, to reflect the increased attendance.

RESOLVED (by 4 for 1 against with 0 abstentions) to recommend to Cabinet that performance indicator target 2.1, the number of people attending White Rock Theatre performances, for March 2016 be increased from 75,000 to 77,000.

The committee also thanked Virginia Gilbert, who was due to leave the council, for her efforts during her time as Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure.

Consideration was given to options to improve the offer for students in the town. The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture confirmed that the council had developed a relationship with the students union of the University of Brighton. She commented that the variety of cafes, restaurants and venues in the town had improved over recent years, recently the council had also been able to support a number of new entertainment businesses through the Success grants fund. Members had also been advised that University of Brighton students could access sports facilities for discounted rates at the council's leisure centres.

Members highlighted the need to create a vibrant evening economy in the town for residents, students and visitors. The Director of Operational Services replied that the council intended to review and refresh its licensing and saturation policy over the coming months, to ensure these were appropriate for the changing nature of the evening economy in Hastings. The review would also provide an opportunity to ensure the council's regulatory policies were in line with broader regeneration objectives for the town. Members suggested that the council may wish to consider an additional policy to encourage live music and performances at the venues around the town.

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The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture advised that the council had been successful in attracting a grant of £150,000 from the Arts Council to support the Stade Saturday's programme of events in 2015/16. She added that this was particularly important given the wide range of other events that would be taking place in the town next year to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings.

Members acknowledged the challenges in the developing viable plans for the former Millennium Community land at Ore Valley. Site 4 in Frederick Road had recently been marketed by Seachange, but attracted very limited interest. Members discussed possible alternative short-term uses for the sites, until development proposals could be brought forward.

The committee welcomed the launch of the social letting agency pilot. The Assistant Director for Housing and Built Environment advised that the agency had let four properties, the tenants of which may otherwise have been unable to access affordable, high quality accommodation in the private rented sector.

Members welcomed the update that the target to determine major residential and commercial planning applications had been exceeded, 96.9% of applications had been determined within 13 weeks by March 2015.

Members discussed the planned refurbishment works to Bottle Alley, as part of the council's wider Seafront Strategy. The Leader of the Council advised that works to refurbish and redecorate Bottle Alley were due to begin in September 2015, the works included installing new lighting throughout the structure.

The Marketing and Improvement Manger advised that the council was currently in the process of upgrading its CCTV facilities. An all Member site visit to the CCTV control room would be scheduled, once the works had been completed.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that –

- 1) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thank staff for their hard work in achieving the targets set out in the corporate plan;**
- 2) The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2015/16 be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 6 July 2015**
- 3) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee assist the council pilot new ways of presenting performance during 2015/16**

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.

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4. FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN HASTINGS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR THE TOWN'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN AN ACADEMISED CONTEXT

Councillor Batsford, as Chair of the review, presented the review team's findings to the committee. He explained that the review had arisen because of the changing educational landscape in the town, the role of a number of key education agencies, including the Local Education Authority, had also changed. Hastings had a history of below average educational attainment, and members noted that this issue was shared by a number of other coastal towns. The review had examined the role of Hastings Borough Council in supporting partnership working between key stakeholders to help improve educational performance and outcomes for the town's children and young people.

The review had included contributions from both education providers and non-educational partners. Members had been encouraged by the commitment of all partners to working in partnership to help improve educational outcomes for young people. Members identified a number of key themes impacting educational attainment, including the recruitment and retention of high calibre staff, support for pupils with special educational needs and the image of Hastings as place to live and work. The team considered examples of good practice from other authorities, including a model for partnership working adopted by Essex County Council and Tendring District Council.

The review team recommended formation of a task and finish group consisting of key partners to consider a model for future partnership working. The recommendations of the task and finish group would then be considered by the Local Strategic Partnership.

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

RESOLVED (by 4 for 1 against with 0 abstentions) that –

- 1) The committee support recommendations and next steps set out, and;**
- 2) The committee thank those involved in this review**

The reason for this decision was:

To consider the review team's recommendations.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 YEAR END UPDATE

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer presented an update on the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2014/15. Members had completed all three pieces of work that they had identified as a high priority for this year.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 8.26 pm)

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