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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES

18 JUNE 2015

Present: Councillors Fitzgerald (Chair), Scott, Turner, Charman, Lee, Batsford, Howard, Pragnell, Sinden and Webb

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Westley, Edwards, Beaver and Roberts

6. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer invited nominations for the appointment of Chair for the duration of the meeting. Councillor Webb proposed that Councillor Fitzgerald should take the Chair, which was seconded by Councillor Scott.

RESOLVED that Councillor Fitzgerald be appointed as Chair for the duration of the meeting

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Pragnell	3	Personal – East Sussex County Council representative on the Safer Hastings Partnership Personal – Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Webb	3	Personal – Vice Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

8. UPDATE ON 2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services officer presented an update report on the 2014/15 Overview and Scrutiny work programme, highlighting that Members had completed all three of the areas of work they had identified as high priorities at the 2014 annual meeting.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs had met to consider their recommendations on priorities for the 2015/16 Overview and Scrutiny work programme, they were mindful of areas of work Overview and Scrutiny members had suggested over the past year.

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The committee's views were sought on all the future work programme ideas. Members remained as one joint committee to consider the topics put forward for consideration. Senior officers aided the committee in their discussion on the suggested areas of work.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs had identified three areas of work around improving health outcomes for the people of the town, the council's organisational transformation and the role of Overview and Scrutiny.

As part of the work on organisational transformation, the Chairs and Vice Chairs recommended a review of digital inclusion. Members noted that this review would complement work already being undertaken by council officers. The review would seek to explore how the digital by design project could support the council's customer first approach. Members would also seek to promote digital inclusion, particularly amongst potentially vulnerable groups, as an increasing number of council services were made available online.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs also proposed a review of community safety. The review would examine the role of the council and its partner agencies in ensuring community safety. It would also be necessary for members to consider the impact of reductions to the budgets of key agencies on this activity. The committee suggested that members of the review team should also look at earlier initiatives to address community safety issues, such as the reduce the strength campaign.

Members noted that it would be necessary to refine their areas of interest in respect of improving healthcare outcomes for the people of the town, as this was a potentially broad and complex subject. The Chairs and Vice Chairs recommended that members receive an update on local healthcare provision for a professional in this field, before deciding how they would like to progress this area of work.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs recommended that a task and finish group be formed to carry out the review of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The findings of the task and finish group would then be reported to Scrutiny Steering Group, before being considered at the relevant council committees as necessary.

Members noted the outstanding scrutiny commitments from previous work programmes, a programme of activities for each quarter had been produced showing how these commitments could be met alongside the 2015/16 work programme ideas.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the annual meeting, having considered the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs, agree the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2015/16 municipal year

The reason for this decision was:

It is the responsibility of Members serving on the two Overview and Scrutiny committees, Resources and Services, to set their own work programme for each municipal year at the Annual Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny committees, whilst taking into account the advice of officers present.

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9. UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE AND THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

Following a request from Overview and Scrutiny Members, the Director of Corporate Services and Governance and the Director of Operational Services gave a presentation on the outlook for the council over the coming year. The council remained a politically driven authority, the Directors gave an overview of the structures that had been put in place to ensure the policies and objectives set by the political leadership of the council could be delivered effectively. They commented that, given the financial pressure facing the council, there was a need to prioritise certain activities.

The presentation set out the structure of each of the council's directorates, following the recent review of the senior management structure. As a result of the reduced size of the council's management team, there had also been a loss of experience and expertise within the organisation, it was therefore necessary to review and reorganise the council's working practices to create additional capacity to pursue the council's ambitious plans for the future of the town. Discussion took place regarding the use of technology to achieve the changes to the council's working practices.

The Director of Operational Services set out the regeneration priorities for the town over the coming years, these included the regeneration of the White Rock area, improvements to Hastings Castle and a series of cultural events to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 2016. He commented that the town had changed significantly over recent years and that a number of ongoing regeneration projects would require a longer term commitment from the council, its partners and the local community. Members noted that it was necessary for the council to bid for external funding to support its regeneration activities and were keen to maintain capacity within the organisation to support this.

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance advised that the council's Accommodation and Transformation Manager would give a presentation on progress with the transformation programme at quarter one Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Services.

The committee thanked the Director of Corporate Services and Governance and the Director of Operational Services for their presentation.

10. INVITATION TO LEAD MEMBERS FOR 2014/15

The Senior Corporate and Democratic Services Officer asked for the committee's approval to invite Lead Members to the quarterly Overview and Scrutiny performance monitoring committees for the 2015/16 municipal year.

RESOLVED that Lead members be formally invited to attend their respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the 2015/16 municipal year

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(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.55 pm)