

TITLE	Discussion with Executive Members
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 22 November 2017
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Environmental Health, Leisure and Libraries Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Overview and Scrutiny is one of the checks and balances which ensure that the Council and its partners make and implement effective decisions.

Discussions between the Committee and Executive Members are aimed at developing greater understanding of key issues over the year ahead and identifying issues which can benefit from challenge and/or support from Overview and Scrutiny. The outcome will be greater clarity on the challenges facing the Council and a more robust decision making process.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider the submissions from the Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Environmental Health, Leisure and Libraries and the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement;
- 2) highlight any issues which will benefit from challenge and/or support from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the year ahead.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017/18 Members have identified the benefit of discussions with the Council's Executive Members. The aim of the discussions is to increase awareness of the key policy and service issues over the year ahead and to identify areas where Overview and Scrutiny is available to provide effective challenge and support.

Members have agreed the principle that Overview and Scrutiny can add more value if it is proactive rather than reactive. This will be achieved if issues are scrutinised prior to implementation and emerging policies are considered at an earlier stage.

Councillors Norman Jorgensen and Simon Weeks have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the key issues and policies to be considered in the next year.

Background

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017/18 Members have identified the benefit of early discussions with the Council's Executive Members. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees aim to facilitate this process by:

- considering issues which reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritising topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involving local residents and stakeholders;
- being flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

The aim of the discussions with Executive Members is to increase awareness of the key policy and service issues over the year ahead and to identify areas where Overview and Scrutiny is available to provide effective challenge and support. Members have agreed the principle that Overview and Scrutiny can add more value if it is proactive rather than reactive. This will be achieved if issues are scrutinised prior to implementation and emerging policies are considered at an earlier stage.

Councillors Norman Jorgensen and Simon Weeks have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss their portfolios and the key issues to be considered in the next year.

Councillor Norman Jorgensen is Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Environmental Health, Leisure and Libraries

Councillor Jorgensen's responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the work of the Environment service;
- Identifying and addressing flooding and drainage issues and the production of a flooding and drainage strategy;
- Overseeing waste collection and recycling services and representing the Council on the Re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board;
- Overseeing country parks, open space, SANG and provision of playgrounds;
- Developing partnerships with agencies and partners such as Towns and Parishes;
- Overseeing the Leisure and Sports Development Strategies;
- Developing a Minerals and waste Plan;
- Overseeing the development of arts, leisure, culture and library strategies for the Borough;
- Overseeing the Health and Safety, Environmental Health, Building Control, Licensing, Trading Standards, Public Protection and Community Resilience functions;

- Overseeing the development of the Council’s approach to climate change issues, including energy efficiency and management of a Carbon Reduction Plan.

Councillor Simon Weeks is Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement

Councillor Weeks’ responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the production and amendment of all statutory and service plans relating to Planning, Planning Enforcement and Land Use;
- Overseeing consultation exercises relating to Planning and Development;
- Overseeing the Council’s approach to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues;
- Overseeing S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions;
- Representing the Council on outside bodies and in discussions with regional, national and government bodies;
- Acting as primary press spokesperson for matters relating to Planning and Environment.

Annex A contains the key lines of enquiry agreed by the Chairman and submitted to the Executive Members in advance of the meeting.

The Agenda also includes the Council Plan Performance Monitoring report for Quarter 2 (July-September 2017) and the Executive Forward Programme. These two reports include performance information and future Executive items of relevance to the portfolios of Councillors Jorgensen and Weeks. Members may wish to explore any specific issues of interest as part of the wider discussion.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	NA

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
--

To be considered as part of the discussions.
--

Cross-Council Implications

The roles of Executive Member impact on a wide range of areas which have an impact across the organisation and the Borough.

List of Background Papers

NA

Contact Neil Carr	Service Democratic Services
--------------------------	------------------------------------

Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk
-----------------------------------	---

Date 10 November 2017	Version No. 1
------------------------------	----------------------

Key Lines of Enquiry

Norman Jorgensen – Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Environmental Health, Leisure and Libraries

Introduction

In order to assist the Committee in their discussions we have created some indications on the lines of questioning we wish to pursue. These are not exclusive and we reserve the right to look at any other areas which emerge during the discussion. It would be helpful to the operation of the Committee if all answers are as brief as possible.

Presentations

In line with good custom and practice for other councils, presentations are not allowed during the meeting but they can be circulated in advance if considered to be helpful for our discussions.

Line 1 – Policies

Can you please inform the Committee of any creation or deletion of policies over the next year? Can you also cover any planned amendments of existing policies for the next year?

Line 2 – Arrangements

Can you please inform the Committee how you plan to develop these policies over the next year? Will backbenchers be involved – e.g. through a working party? Will this involvement be cross party? If a working party will the Chairman be independent?

Line 3 – Timescales

Whilst accepting that timescales have to be flexible what is the target completion of these activities? If there are any intermediate steps (e.g. consultations) can you include them in the timescales.

Line 4 – Consultation

Can you please inform the Committee of any consultations planned for any of these issues? What other steps will you take to involve residents and community groups in the development and implementation of new or amended policies?

Line 5 – Communication

What are the key communication issues relating to your portfolio? How do you intend to get the key messages across to residents, partners and the media?

Key Lines of Enquiry

Simon Weeks – Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement

Introduction

In order to assist the Committee in their discussions we have created some indications on the lines of questioning we wish to pursue. These are not exclusive and we reserve the right to look at any other areas which emerge during the discussion. It would be helpful to the operation of the Committee if all answers are as brief as possible.

Presentations

In line with good custom and practice for other councils presentations are not allowed during the meeting but they can be circulated in advance if considered to be helpful for our discussions.

Line 1 – Policies

Can you please inform the Committee of any creation or deletion of policies over the next year? Can you also cover any planned amendments of existing policies for the next year?

Line 2 – Arrangements

Can you please inform the Committee how you plan to develop these policies over the next year? Will backbenchers be involved – e.g. through a working party? Will this involvement be cross party? If a working party will the Chairman be independent?

Line 3 – Timescales

Whilst accepting that timescales have to be flexible what is the target completion of these activities? If there are any intermediate steps (e.g. consultations) can you include them in the timescales.

Line 4 – Consultation

Can you please inform the Committee of any consultations planned for any of these issues? What other steps will you take to involve residents and community groups in the development and implementation of new or amended policies?

Line 5 – Communication

What are the key communication issues relating to your portfolio? How do you intend to get the key messages across to residents, partners and the media?