

TITLE	Leader and Chief Executive Updates
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 18 July 2018
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance
LEAD MEMBER	Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Leader of the Council

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 the Leader/Chief Executive 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 and responses from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive;
- 2) identify 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 2018/19 Members have identified the benefit of discussions with the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and the Chief Executive. 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.

Councillor Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Leader of the Council) and Manjeet Gill (Chief Executive) have been invited to attend the meeting of the Committee on 18 July 2018. Key lines of enquiry (Annex A) have been developed to provide a framework for the discussions.

Background

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2018/19 Members have identified the benefit of early discussions with the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and the Chief Executive. 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 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.

Councillor Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Leader of the Council) and Manjeet Gill (Chief Executive) have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the key challenges facing the Council and key priorities for the year ahead. Executive Members will be invited to attend future meetings of the Committee.

Councillor Haitham Taylor is Leader of the Council

The Leader's responsibilities include:

- Appointing Members to the Executive and making changes during the Municipal Year;
- Co-ordination of Strategy and overseeing the production of the Council Plan;
- Working with Executive Members to co-ordinate the Council's services and advising the Executive on progress against the Council's financial targets;
- Developing the Council's Communications and Marketing Strategy;
- Raising the Council's profile and promoting consultation, communication and participation with residents, community groups, businesses and the public sector;
- Overseeing the operation of Council-owned companies and their subsidiaries;
- Overseeing the Council's IT function.

Manjeet Gill is the Council's Interim Chief Executive

The Chief Executive's role is to manage the day-to-day operation of the Council within the agreed policy framework and to work with the Leader, Members and partners to develop the Council's Vision, Priorities and Council Plan.

Annex A contains the key lines of enquiry agreed by the Chairman and submitted to the Leader and Chief Executive. Rather than develop separate lines of enquiry, it is suggested that the Leader and Chief Executive may wish to jointly respond to the questions set out in Annex A.

Each Key Line of Enquiry will be time limited in order to ensure that each issue is addressed at the meeting.

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 Leader and Chief Executive have a wide impact across the organisation and across the Borough.

List of Background Papers

NA

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Date 9 July 2018	Version No. 1

Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)

Introductory Remarks (10 minutes)

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive are invited to make any introductory remarks (up to 10 minutes) relating to progress and successes achieved by the Council over the past year.

The Committee will then use the Key Lines of Enquiry (below) to enquire about progress on key priorities, future plans, management of risk and emerging pressures.

KLOE 1 – Priorities (30 minutes)

At the meeting of the Committee in September 2017 Councillor Haitham Taylor outlined the following priorities for the Council:

- Local Plan Update.
- Improving communications.
- Engagement with the Government.
- Engagement with the business community.
- Supporting the more deprived parts of the Borough.
- Building capacity in the Council-owned companies.
- Making the Council self-sufficient.
- Highways investment to tackle congestion.
- Working with partners, including Towns/Parishes and the voluntary sector.
- Managing demand and risk relating to adult and children's services.

Please provide a brief update of progress made against each one of these priorities over the past year.

At the meeting in September 2017 Councillor Haitham Taylor stated that the two most pressing issues were:

- the Council's plans to meet housing needs and
- the achievement of financial stability.

Please provide details of progress on tackling these two issues.

Are these still the two most important priorities for WBC?

Have any new priorities/pressures emerged over the past year?

In relation to the Council's financial stability, please provide an update on any emerging budget pressures and performance of the £100m investment fund approved by the Executive.

In relation to the growing demands relating to social care, what plans does the Council have to ensure adequate demand management and funding?

What financial and service impacts arise out of the Berkshire West Integrated Care System and how will progress be monitored?

In relation to the funding of social care and the move to Negative Revenue Support Grant, what progress is the Council making in lobbying the Government on these issues?

KLOE 2 – 21st Century Council (15 minutes)

The 21st Century Council programme has been running for almost two years. Two of its key aims are to improve the customer experience and to make the Council more efficient and financially secure.

Please comment on progress relating to the 21st Century Council programme.

Please provide an update on the delays relating to the People's Services element of the 21st Century Council programme and the timeframe for completion of the overall project.

Concern has been expressed about the large number of interim managers/consultants employed by the Council – in relation to organisational stability, staff morale and cost.

Please provide an update on the current level of interims/consultants and progress in filling key posts across the Council on a permanent basis.

KLOE 3 – Council Plan (15 minutes)

At its meeting in May 2018 the Committee received an update on the development of the new Council Plan which indicated that the new Plan would be submitted to Council for approval early in 2019.

Please provide an update on the development of the new Council Plan, including:

- **Progress on discussions with key partners, stakeholders, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and residents.**

- **The development of priorities, performance indicators and stretching targets to underpin delivery of the Plan.**
- **Utilising the Council’s improved IT systems to deliver more accurate and timely performance reports to Members.**
- **The timeline for completing the Plan and consultation with WBC Members.**

KLOE 4 – Town Centre Regeneration (15 minutes)

Wokingham Town Centre regeneration is now well under way.

Please provide a brief update of progress on the main elements of the regeneration programme.

Please comment on the management of key risks relating to the regeneration programme.

The financial success of the regeneration programme relies to some extent on the sale of the new residential properties being built for sale in Wokingham town centre. The recent construction of Saxon Court in Denmark Street provides car parking on the ground floor which may be more attractive to the potential market.

Please comment on progress relating to the residential elements of the regeneration programme and any emerging risks relating to the property market.

In relation to the Market Place improvements, what lessons have been learnt in relation to project planning and communication with shops, businesses and residents?

KLOE 5 – Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment (10 minutes)

One of the Council’s key priorities is narrowing the gap in educational attainment for all vulnerable children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What progress has the Council made in narrowing the gap in educational attainment for pupils at primary and secondary schools across the Borough?

How is progress on “narrowing the gap” reported to Members?

How does the Council’s progress on narrowing the gap compare with progress made by similar local authorities?

KLOE 6 – Community Safety and Fear of Crime (10 minutes)

Members are aware of growing pockets of anti-social behaviour across the Borough.

Please update the Committee on measures being taken with the police and other partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce concern amongst residents and community groups.

KLOE 7 - Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes (10 minutes)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are addressing the issues in their work programmes for 2018/19.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has agreed to undertake a Scrutiny review of the Council's grass cutting service, commencing in August 2018.

Are you aware of any other services causing concern which would benefit from a Scrutiny review?

The Government intends to publish updated Statutory Guidance on the operation of Overview and Scrutiny at the end of 2018.

Do you have any thoughts on measures to make Overview and Scrutiny more effective and improve working relationships between Scrutiny and the Executive?

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