

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM

### **Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Rachel Burgess, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Norman Jorgensen, Sarah Kerr, Rebecca Margetts, Jackie Rance and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

### **Other Councillors Present**

Councillors: Chris Bowring, Peter Dennis, Gary Cowan, Parry Bath, Michael Firmager and Shahid Younis

### **Officers Present**

Ian Bellinger, Service Manager for Growth and Delivery  
Lewis Borges, Head of Change  
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist  
Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager  
Sally Watkins, Assistant Director, Digital and Change  
Callum Wernham, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

### **43. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **44. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 8 February 2022 and the meeting held on 23 February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **45. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **46. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **47. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **48. QUARTER 3 21/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 23 to 74, which gave details of performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) for the third quarter of 2021/22 (October to December).

Shahid Younis (Deputy Executive Member for Insight and Change) and Will Roper (Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that performance in Quarter 3 had been consistent against the previous quarter, with 31 KPIs rated as Green (on target), seven rated as Amber (near target) and five rated as Red (off target). The following targets were rated as Red:

AS7 – Proportion of people receiving long-term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months. This target had been set to be a challenging stretch target with the aim of. Although the target was rated Red, performance was one of the highest in the south east.

AS1 – Social work assessments allocated to commence within seven days of the requests (counted at the point of allocation). Again this was a stretching target. 93% of assessments were allocated within 28 days which was high performance compared to other councils.

CIC2 – Percentage of households for whom homelessness has been prevented – the service was experiencing increased demand with many households presenting at the point they became homeless which limited the Council's ability to carry out prevention work.

CS4 – Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plan assessments completed within 20 weeks of referral. Timeliness declined in Quarter 3 in addition there was a rise in complexity of concerns and the timescale for receiving information from external partners.

RA3 – Usage of Wokingham Borough leisure centres. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on attendance at leisure centres across the Borough. All leisure centres had reopened in Quarter 3 but then closed again. Usage figures are now starting to improve.

Appended to the report was an overview of progress made in each of the Council's departments together with a detailed breakdown of performance against each of the KPIs. Also appended to the report was a breakdown of the KPIs reported to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points:

CIC2 – Percentage of households for whom homelessness has been prevented – the report stated that the service was experiencing increased demand with many households presenting to the Council at the point they had become homeless which limited the ability to carry out prevention work. It was proposed by Sarah Kerr that the performance against this KPI be referred to the Anti-Poverty Working Group for consideration.

CIC3 – Percentage of households who have secured accommodation available to them for the next six months. This KPI missed the target of 40% for the third quarter in a row. Would the appointment of two new Homelessness Prevention Officers enable the service to hit the target? It was confirmed that this query would be referred back to the service for a written response.

PG6 – Number of affordable dwellings completed. The cumulative number of completions was 133 in Q3 against a target of 150. What steps were being taken to bring performance back on line with a cumulative target of 201 for the year? It was confirmed that this query would be referred back to the service for a detailed response.

RA8 – Capital budget monitoring forecast position. The target for the KPI was +/- 1% or if there was any underspend. Should underspends raise concerns about performance and, if so, should be reported as Green? It was confirmed that this query would be referred to the service for a detailed response.

CIC 9 & 10 – Number of resident subscribers to Wokingham Borough Connect & Overall customer satisfaction across phone and web. Why was there no RAG status for these indicators? It was confirmed that CIC9 was a cumulative indicator of total interactions. CIC10 was currently being benchmarked to identify a suitable target. It was confirmed that progress against these two KPIs would be reviewed with the service.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Shahid Younis and Will Roper be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;
- 2) the performance of KPIs relevant to the Committee be noted;
- 3) the additional KPIs reported to the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted;
- 4) further information be circulated in response to the specific queries raised by Members.

**49. CHANGE**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 75 to 80, which provided an update on the Council’s Business Change Service. The service supported the Council to deliver strategic transformation, linked to the Council Plan, through Directorate-led programmes and projects.

Shahid Younis (Deputy Executive Member for Insight and Change), Sally Watkins (Assistant Director, Digital and Change) and Lewis Borges (Head of Change) attended the meeting to answer Member questions.

The report stated that the Business Change Service had established a Project Management Office Framework and an Organisational Change Gateway, which was a formal process to review business cases for change. This provided effective project management governance and a triage system for new change requests. This ensured strategic alignment to the Council Plan and supported robust business cases for change.

The service had also developed the Council’s first Graduate Academy, which had grown to be the largest in the South of England outside of London. The Academy provided training, mentoring and coaching for future local government leaders through placements in key transformational activities.

The report stated that in 2021/22 the service had supported key strategic transformation initiatives such as the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, the Council’s Equality Strategy, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Covid Recovery Strategy, the Voluntary and Community Sector Hub and the redesign and move of the Public Protection Service back in-house.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

How did the Council attract candidates for the Graduate Academy? It was confirmed that officers worked with the LGA National Graduate Development Programme. The Council

offered a variety of placements, a senior leader mentorship programme and experience of frontline services.

Were there plans in place to retain graduates who had been through the Academy? It was confirmed that the Council's senior leadership team had met to discuss a focus on this issue, providing permanent roles or fixed term contracts for graduates. The LGA had taken a keen interest in the Council's Academy.

Was there a time limit after graduation for graduates who wished to join the Academy? Could we attract graduates who had already worked in different fields? It was confirmed that there was no time limit for graduates who went through the LGA route. Officers were working with the Council's Communications Team to explore options for attracting candidates directly through our own promotion.

It was felt that greater understanding of the work of the Business Change Service would benefit all Members. Could a training session be run for Members? It was confirmed that a training session could be run for Members.

Looking back at major transformation programmes, was the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council programme defunct? If so, what lessons had been learnt? It was confirmed that the 21 CC programme had ended in 2019. The learning had been around moving from "big bang" projects to a more flexible approach, working with directorates and building change around services.

What role did the service play in the redesign of the Corporate Transport Unit (CTU)? It was confirmed that the service had reviewed the way in which the CTU worked across the organisation, involving a number of directorates. The service had project managed the transition to new ways of working and service design.

How did the service measure the success of its projects and programmes? It was confirmed that success was measured in the delivery of service efficiencies outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan and recorded improvements to the customer experience for residents who used services and contacted the Council.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Shahid Younis, Sally Watkins and Lewis Borges be thanked for attending the meeting and answering Member questions;
- 2) the approach to Change activity across the Council and the progress made in 2021/22 be noted;
- 3) the Business Change Service arrange a Member training session to improve Members' understanding of the service and its impact on the organisation.

## **50. 5 YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 81 to 85, which provided an update on key issues relating to the Council's five year housing land supply.

Ian Bellinger (Service Manager for Growth and Delivery) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that national planning policy required local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing. The absence of a five year housing land supply may lead to the application of the presumption in favour of granting permission for development set out in national planning policy. The Council's most recent assessment was the Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment based at 31 March 2021 which concluded that there was a demonstrable deliverable supply of 5.1 years against the monitoring requirement.

The 2021 assessment noted that recent housing delivery in the Borough had been at historically high levels. This had resulted in the bank of sites with planning permission reducing at a faster rate, hence the marginal outcome of 5.1 years. Officers have put forward the view that this should be seen in the context of recent housing growth in the Borough significantly exceeding housing need.

The report stated that, by its very nature, the five year housing land supply test created an opportunity for speculation which could undermine the plan-led principle. A particular concern was the absence of national planning guidance on the situation of over delivery in the past. The Council continues to lobby the Government for the deletion of the five year housing land supply test and a change to national planning guidance on the issue of past over delivery. Maintaining a five year housing land supply would be a key issue for the Local Plan Update.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

There was agreement that the Government should remove the five year housing land supply test. It was confirmed that the Council had raised concerns about the way in which the system operated and continued to lobby on this issue, most recently in a letter to Michael Gove MP in January 2022. If the current system was retained the Council suggested a change to Government guidance to ensure that over-delivery was rewarded and that, in such circumstances, the presumption in favour of granting planning permission should not apply. It was noted that the Council had over-delivered on housing numbers for each of the previous five years, yet still received challenges to its published five year housing land supply assessment.

In relation to the over-delivery of homes over the past five years, how many of these homes were affordable, net zero and/or included renewable energy investment? It was confirmed that these were separate issues to the five year housing land supply and were the subject of separate reports to Members, for example through the quarterly KPI performance monitoring reports and the annual update on progress against the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

When would the next assessment of the Borough's five year housing land supply be carried out? It was confirmed that the assessment work would commence on 31 March 2022. Officers would visit the relevant sites with planning permission and make an assessment of progress. The final assessment figures would then be available by early June.

How did the Council work with developers to ensure the timely delivery of new homes? It was confirmed that officers worked with developers to ensure that sites could be delivered, for example by working to address access issues which helped to unlock sites.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Ian Bellinger be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) progress relating to the maintenance of the Borough's five year housing land supply be noted;
- 3) the ongoing lobbying of the Government on issues relating to the five year housing land supply test and the treatment of Councils which over-delivered on housing numbers be supported.

#### **51. TREE PROTECTION & BIODIVERSITY TASK & FINISH GROUP**

The Committee considered the report of the Tree Protection and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group had been established in 2021 in order to scrutinise the Council's approach to tree protection and biodiversity and to examine the implications of new initiatives such as the Environment Act, which received Royal Assent in late 2021.

Chris Bowring (Chairman) and the other members of the Task and Finish Group (Councillors Cowan, Firmager, Fishwick and Rance) attended the meeting to present the report and answer questions from the Committee.

In addition to the Task and Finish Group's Terms of Reference, it was noted that, at its meeting in November 2021, the Council had debated a Motion on the declaration of an Ecological Emergency and had referred the matter to the Task and Finish Group for consideration. The Task and Finish Group's report included feedback on the Motion which would be submitted to full Council in due course. The Task and Finish Group report also included a number of recommendations relating to tree protection and biodiversity which would be submitted to the Executive for consideration.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

The Task and Finish Group report include a case study on the loss of approximately 450 mature trees at Bearwood Lake. The report outlined the process whereby these trees had been felled at short notice under the provisions of the Reservoirs act 1975. In effect, the Council was not consulted about the removal of the trees and did not have any powers to intervene in the process. This was felt to be an unsatisfactory outcome which had caused an outcry amongst the local community.

In relation to the Council's plans to plant 250,000 trees over a five year period, it was noted that 15,000 trees were expected to be planted by the end of March 2022 (6% of the overall total). It was evident that great deal of work would be required to achieve the overall target over the next few years.

It was noted that the Task and Finish Group had not made a recommendation on the declaration of an Ecological Emergency. Instead it had set out some of the pros and cons and invited the full Council to debate the evidence included in the report.

In relation to Recommendation 1 to the Executive it was suggested and agreed that clarification should be included to the effect that an annual update report should be provided on progress relation to the "updated" Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Task and Finish Group’s recommendations relating to improved partnership working with Town and Parish Councils, schools and community groups were welcomed.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Councillors Bowring, Cowan, Firmager, Fishwick and Rance be thanked for their work as part of the Task and Finish Group;
- 2) the officers and external witnesses who gave evidence and supported the work of the Task and Finish Group be thanked for their contribution;
- 3) Recommendation 1 to the Executive be amended to refer to and annual update report on the “updated” Biodiversity Action Plan;
- 4) the Task and Finish Group’s 15 recommendations to the Executive, as amended, be approved;
- 5) the Task and Finish Group’s three recommendations to full Council be approved;
- 6) progress against the Task and Finish Group’s recommendations be reviewed by the Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year.

**52. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 87 to 100, which gave details of proposed items for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2022/23.

The report stated that the aim of effective work programming was to:

- Reflect local needs and concerns
- Prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- Involve local residents and stakeholders in the process;
- Be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Set out at Annex A to the report were a number of suggestions for Scrutiny items submitted by Members and local residents. Annex B contained a draft work programme for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee based on standing items, items carried forward and priorities previously approved by Members. The Committee considered Annex A and B and merged the two into a composite work programme for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Committee considered the specific items in Annex A as follows:

Table: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Requests 2022/23 – Annex A

No	Request	By	Action
1	New housing developments – issues relating to adoption by WBC of infrastructure including roads, drainage, open space and play areas. Need for improved monitoring and reporting – holding developers to account. Link to review of	Cllr Peter Dennis	OSMC Work Programme

	the recommendations of the Estate Infrastructure Task and Finish Group from 2019.		
2	Footpaths – developers and the Council should upgrade footpaths before the developments are completed and not after. Could the Committee suggest an assessment of the current footpath network (not just public) the state of these and plans to make them more accessible.	Jon Sellars	C&C Work Programme
3	State of Wokingham town centre bus stops. Request for improvements to help older people, people with disabilities and families with pushchairs to get on and off buses more easily.	Pam Small	C&C Work Programme
4	Litter – request for improved litter-picking on the A327 on a regular basis.	Rita Carr	Refer to service
5	Litter – volume of litter around the Borough. Need to hold developers to account. Could S106/CIL monies be used to employ contractors to at least undertake some litter clearance particularly along road margins and around footpaths?	Jon Sellars	OSMC Work Programme – link to item 1 above
6	Air Pollution – new properties being built in the Borough and surrounding boroughs continues. The more green space that is removed, the more air pollution and the associated health issues becomes a problem.	Jon Sellars	OSMC Work Programme. Annual report on measures to improve Air Quality
7	Transparency and honesty – could the Committee discuss ways in which the Council could be more transparent and honest in its communication material.	Jon Sellars	OSMC Work Programme – link to item 1 above
8	The Council's commitment to active travel and the climate emergency. Spending money on 'reducing congestion' to encourage more car use should be challenged in the context of a climate emergency. Increased spending money on proper segregated safe cycling routes that link across the Borough	Wendy Measures	OSMC Work Programme. Review LCWIP (cycling and walking)
9	Scrutinise the process for the Secondary School Strategy which is several years late and doesn't give a solution to the lack of secondary school places in the south of the Borough.	Wendy Measures	CS Work Programme
10	Waste and recycling sites - now that we are exiting	Steve	OSMC Work

	<p>COVID restrictions, review whether the constraints on having to book a refuse site visit are still valid.</p> <p>Link to the emerging Waste Strategy.</p>	Davies	Programme and refer to Member working group
11	Local highway reviews. The state of our local roads and repairs upon them is poor. Spending on temporary patching rather than responsive strategic fixes and preventative maintenance.	Steve Davies	C&C Work Programme
12	The immediate area around Hawkedon Primary School. Local traffic does not abide to the 20mph speed limits at school times and this is in not enforced.	Madeline Stonehill	Refer to service
13	Anti-social Behaviour in Wokingham town centre due to late night drinking. The problems are very particular to the times when people are heading home after a night out and include broken glass, loud and noisy behaviour, broken windows, fighting, stabbings and damage to lights, hanging baskets and planters.	Cllr Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	C&C Work Programme. Discuss with Thames Valley Police
14	The youth shelter adjacent to the play park at Maiden Place is often vandalised and frequented by youths committing anti-social behaviour. There is no evident police presence within this area The play park itself is a really poor level of provision.	Madeline Stonehill	Refer to service and discuss with TVP
15	Recycling - where does our recycling actually end up. I've responded a few times to posts from RE3 about high recycling rates (which is well and good), but not had any response.	Tim Watson	Refer to service – respond to resident
16	Introduce a stage 3 to the Council's Complaints procedure to align it with other Councils (Bracknell Forest is one example) and add the use of Trust Pilot or similar schemes to the process to improve openness and transparency	Cllr Gary Cowan	OSMC Work Programme
17	Scrutinise GP performance within central Wokingham, in particular the Wokingham Medical Centre - in the NHS nationwide patient survey it was ranked in the bottom 5%	Cllr Charles Margetts	HOSC Work Programme
18	Drivers ignoring street signs in Milton Road, Wokingham which is a no entry Road when coming from Broad Street and buses only when leaving Milton Road heading towards Broad	Mark Rath	Refer to service and discuss with TVP

	Street. The signage is very clear but more and more drivers ignore both signs and drive straight through.		
19	The process for getting double yellow lines painted at a junction or other road where parking is dangerous or inconsiderate is far too lengthy. I have instances in my ward where the process has taken almost 3 years. Current procedure reflects statutory requirements on WBC. Need for updated legislation.	Cllr Shirley Boyt	Respond to Cllr Boyt – statutory requirements and need to lobby the Government
20	Civil Parking Enforcement – annual update report to OSMC in line with agreement with the contractor NSL. Last annual report submitted in 2018. Improve transparency and public scrutiny of the service.	Cllr Maria Gee	C&C Work Programme
21	Scrutiny of the strategy to lower transport emissions - this strategy will be ready in May 2022 to then go out for consultation. This will be a new strategy and one that is required to reduce the harmful emissions of transport on such areas as health, climate change and the environment.	Cllr Paul Fishwick	OSMC Work Programme
22	Accessibility of the Sport and Leisure provision for less well-off families, older people, or those with additional needs or health conditions. Feedback from residents suggests not enough is being done to enable all residents to take part in the Sport and Leisure offer. Greater participation benefits residents and the Council.	Cllr Rachel Burgess	HOSC Work Programme

Members confirmed that the work programmes would allow flexibility for the consideration of urgent issues and the Call-In of decisions made by the Executive and individual Executive Members. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider its allocated work programme and timetable items into the schedule of meetings for 2022/23. Any further suggestions for Scrutiny items would be considered by the Management Committee at its meeting in June 2022.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the proposed work programmes for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved;
- 2) each Overview and Scrutiny Committee allocate items from the work programmes to individual meetings in the 2022/23 municipal year;
- 3) any additional items submitted for inclusion in the work programmes be considered at the June 2022 meeting of the Committee.

### **53. COUNCIL MOTIONS**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 101 to 118, which gave details of the Motions approved by Council over the past three years. The report also set out details of actions and progress following the adoption of the Motions.

The Committee had requested an annual report on Council Motions, to be submitted to the meeting in November each year. Members had also requested that the Council's website include details of the approved Motions together with a summary of actions and outcomes for the residents of the Borough.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

Sarah Kerr expressed concern at the limited update information relating to her Motion on Air Pollution Reduction (July 2020). Councillor Kerr recognised that there were some linkages to the Climate Emergency Action Plan but felt that there should be a stand-alone annual update report on the measures taken to address air pollution across the Borough.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) progress against the action points in the Council Motions approved over the past three years, as set out at Annex A to the report, be noted;
- 2) an annual update report on Council Motions be submitted to the November meeting of the Committee;
- 3) details of actions taken in response to the approved Council Motions be set out on the WBC website;
- 4) officers investigate the potential for a stand-alone annual update report on measures to address air pollution across the Borough.

### **54. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME**

The committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 119 to 124.

**RESOLVED:** That the Executive Forward Programme be noted.

### **55. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee considered its forward work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 125 to 134.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes for the remainder of 2021/22 be noted.

### **56. ACTION TRACKER**

The Committee considered the latest Action Tracker report, set out at Agenda pages 135 to 140.

The Chairman reported that the meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive had been rearranged for 23 March 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to

discuss ideas to ensure more effective cooperation and communication between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

**RESOLVED:** That the Action Tracker report be noted.

**57. GUY GRANDISON**

Members noted that this was the final meeting of the Committee for Guy Grandison before he stood down as a member of the Council in May 2022. The Committee thanked Councillor Grandison for his contribution to the Management Committee and his work as Chairman of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.