

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.45 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Jim Frewin (Chairman), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chairman), David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Stuart Munro and Alison Swaddle

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Bill Soane

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Resources & Assets
Emily Higson, Head of Insight, Strategy & Inclusion
Steve Moore, Director, Place & Growth
Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager
Sally Watkins, Assistant Director, Digital & Change
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Committee elected a Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Jim Frewin be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Note: Following a request for a recorded vote, the voting was as follows:

For: David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Jim Frewin, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Bill Soane and Alison Swaddle.

Against: None.

Abstentions: None.

Jim Frewin thanked Members for their support and made some initial comments on the role of Overview and Scrutiny in holding decision makers to account, shaping policy and driving service improvements, resulting in better outcomes and value for money for residents.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee appointed a Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Andrew Mickleburgh be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Note: Following a request for a recorded vote, the voting was as follows:

For: David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Jim Frewin, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Bill Soane and Alison Swaddle.

Against: None.

Abstentions: None.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Gregor Murray.

Bill Soane attended as a substitute.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Andrew Mickleburgh raised the following points:

Minute 48 – Quarter 3 21/22 Performance Report – could the follow-up information requested by the Committee be circulated, in future, to all Overview and Scrutiny Members. It was confirmed that this suggestion would be implemented.

Minute 49 – Change – was the proposed Member training on the Business Change service being arranged. It was confirmed that arrangements were in hand.

Minute 53 – Council Motions – was action being taken to set out Council Motions on the WBC website. It was confirmed that work was ongoing to improve the Council's website. Details of Council Motions would be included on the updated website.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. QUARTER 4 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 17 to 56, which gave details of performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) for the fourth quarter of 2021/22 (January to March) and a summary of overall performance in 2021/22.

Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive & Director, Resources and Assets), Steve Moore (Director, Place & Growth), Sally Watkins (Assistant Director, Digital & Change), Emily Higson (Head of Insight, Strategy & Inclusion) and Will Roper (Customer Insight Analyst & Performance Manager) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that performance in Quarter 4 had been consistent against the previous quarter, showing consistent performance in the face of significant challenges to delivery

from rising costs, increased staff sickness relating to the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and the response to the crisis in Ukraine.

Annual performance for 2021/22 indicated that 67% of KPIs (27) had reached the annual target (Green). Seven KPIs narrowly missed the target (Amber) whilst six KPIs were reported as missing the target (Red). The following KPIs were rated as Red for the year 2021/22:

AS1 – Social work assessments allocated to commence within seven days of the requests (counted at the point of allocation).

AS7 – Proportion of people receiving long-term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months.

CS2 – Percentage of initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days of the decision to hold them.

PG2 – Percentage of households for whom homelessness had been prevented.

PG3 – Percentage of households who have secured accommodation, available to them, for the next six months.

RA3 – Usage of Wokingham Borough leisure centres.

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:

The report indicated that, for Quarter 4, four of the seven Red KPIs related to Adult Social Care. It was confirmed that the service was performing to a high standard and was using "stretching" targets to drive improvement. The stretch targets were, by their nature, harder to achieve and performance should be seen in this light.

It was suggested that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) consider the suite of KPIs relating to Health and Social Care, in discussion with the Executive Member and Director, in order to determine if the current KPIs were driving service improvement. It was also suggested that HOSC consider issues relating to the increased complexity of cases and the impact on risk and service delivery.

Jim Frewin suggested that Members consider suggestions for new and/or amended KPIs at a future meeting. In the meantime, Jim would hold discussions with officers about ways to improve the reporting of the KPIs.

In relation to specific KPIs:

PG6 – Number of affordable dwellings completed – how many completion would be carried forwards into 2022/23? It was confirmed that there had been significant slippage

due to labour and materials shortages. The target for 2021/22 of 201 affordable home completions was missed by 12 completions.

PG21 – Percentage of waste recycled from the kerbside – what work was ongoing to drive up the percentage of waste recycled? It was confirmed that a number of campaigns had been carried out and the new Waste Strategy was currently being developed.

PG12 – number of fly-tipping incidents – what progress was being made through the preventative measures referenced in the report. It was confirmed that progress was being monitored via the cross-party Member working group. More details of the issues considered and progress monitored by the working group would be circulated to the Committee. Members were reminded that, even though recycling figures were improving, the Borough still generated large amounts of waste. The waste hierarchy described the process of reduce-reuse-recycle-recover-dispose. This approach should drive the Council's operations and strategic direction.

RA1 – Completion to time and budget of the regeneration project for the Carnival Pool – was the Carnival Hub on schedule for the proposed opening in summer 2022? It was confirmed that there had been a delay in the fitting out of the new library due to delays in the delivery of furniture. However, the rest of the complex was due to open on schedule.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Graham Ebers, Steve Moore, Sally Watkins, Emily Higson and Will Roper be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;
- 2) the additional information requested by Members be circulated to all Scrutiny Members for information;
- 3) the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to give further consideration to the points raised about the suitability of current KPIs and the impact of increasing case complexity on risk and service delivery;
- 4) Members note that the emerging Waste Strategy was due to be considered at the July meeting of the Committee.

9. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW

The Committee considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 57 to 68, which gave details of the upcoming Scrutiny Improvement Review.

The report stated that the Council underwent a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in 2021. As part of the peer challenge process the Council asked the LGA team to advise on how to make the Overview and Scrutiny function more meaningful and effective. The LGA team observed that Overview and Scrutiny at WBC was often the scene of lively debate and was seen as a political arena rather than creating "good policy" and positive challenge. The team suggested that all Members involved in Scrutiny should understand the terms of reference of each "Scrutiny Board" and recognise what "good scrutiny" looks like.

Following the LGA peer review, the Chief Executive commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to carry out a Scrutiny Improvement Review (SIR). The SIR included the following elements:

- A review of documentation and Overview and Scrutiny reports;
- On-site interviews (scheduled for 20/21 June 2022) and observation of Overview and Scrutiny meetings;
- A study of Scrutiny's role and integration in the Council;
- Joint development of an improvement action plan with follow up work as necessary.

The report gave details of the SIR process and provided guidance on what the CfGS considered that "Good" looked like in the context of Overview and Scrutiny. This included areas such as:

- Culture – the relationships, communication and behaviours underpinning the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny process – the Council's corporate approach, organisational commitment and the status of Scrutiny;
- Member engagement – are Members motivated and engaged? How do they participate, take responsibility and self-manage their role?
- Member skills and application – are skills up-to-date and can Members participate fully or are there development gaps?
- Information – how information is prepared, shared and accessed and used to support the Scrutiny function.
- Impact – ways to ensure that Scrutiny is effective, that it makes a positive difference in the effectiveness of the Council and to local residents;
- Focus – how prioritisation, timeliness and relevance of the work programme and agendas lead to value-adding and productivity;
- Structure – formats used by Scrutiny to carry out its work and how effective these formats are.

It was confirmed that a number of Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Committee members would be invited to hold discussions with representatives from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as part of their two day visit to the Council on 20/21 June 2022.

Appended to the report was the Council's Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol which had been agreed in 2019. The Protocol sought to clarify the relationship between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in order to ensure smooth conduct of Overview and Scrutiny business and effective two-way communication.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made the following points:

Could the Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Members for information. It was confirmed that a copy of the Protocol would be circulated as requested.

Members would welcome a regular update on changes to national legislation which may impact on the Council and provide ideas for Scrutiny topics. It was confirmed that a regular item could be included on the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the update on the upcoming Scrutiny Improvement Review be noted;

- 2) the Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Members for information.
- 3) the Committee's work programme include a regular update on changes to national legislation.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 69 to 74, which gave details of the development of the Committee's work programme for 2022/23.

The report stated that effective work programming was a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan and major policy or service changes. It aimed to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Committee approved initial work programmes for itself and the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Recent discussions had indicated the need for work programming to be more robust and for improved monitoring during the year. As this was the Committee's first meeting in the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the long list of work programme items was attached for consideration and prioritisation.

The report also provided details of the proposed Scrutiny Member training programme for 2022/23. Proposed issues for inclusion in the training programme included:

- Chairing and Leading Scrutiny (to include wider chairing skills);
- Budget Scrutiny;
- Scrutiny of Children's Services;
- Scrutiny of Health and Adult Social Care.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made the following points:

The initial 2022/23 induction/refresher Overview and Scrutiny training session had been held on 7 June 2022 and was positively received by Members.

It was suggested that additional Scrutiny training sessions be delivered on Equalities and Inclusion and Climate Emergency. It was confirmed that Scrutiny training sessions were open to all Members.

Jim Frewin suggested that each Member review the long list of potential Scrutiny items (Annex A) and submit a shortlist of three priorities to Democratic Services. These suggestions could then be considered at the July meeting with a view to developing a more streamlined work programme.

It was suggested that the Leader and Chief Executive be invited to attend the July meeting of the Committee to discuss challenges and priorities for the year ahead.

Members noted the importance of close coordination between the Management Committee and the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny in order to avoid

duplication of effort. It was noted that Community and Corporate had requested that it scrutinise the Local Plan Update, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the emerging Bus Strategy/Bus Improvement Enhanced Partnership.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The proposals set out in the report for developing the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes be endorsed;
- 2) Members notify Democratic Services of their top three work programme priorities – for discussion at the July meeting of the Committee;
- 3) the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive be invited to attend the July meeting of the Committee, rather than the September Committee (currently in the forward programme);
- 4) the proposed Member Scrutiny training programme be expanded to include sessions on Equalities and Inclusion and Climate Emergency;
- 5) the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the Local Plan Update, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the emerging Bus Strategy/Bus Improvement Enhanced Partnership.
- 6) the Committee's work programme include an item, for the September 2022 meeting, on the impact on the Borough of refugees/asylum seekers (including the use of the Moat House hotel).

11. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its work programme for upcoming meetings and that of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out on Agenda pages 75 to 86.

RESOLVED: That the work programmes be noted.

12. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 87 to 92.

RESOLVED: That The Executive Forward Programme be noted.

13. ACTION TRACKER REPORT

The Committee considered the Action Tracker report for the meeting held on 17 March 2022.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Action Tracker report be noted;
- 2) the Committee's Action Tracker report include a summary of earlier actions which had not yet been resolved;
- 3) each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees develop a similar Action Tracker report.

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