

Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2023

Present: Mike Wilcox (Chair)

| Attendance | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Tina Clements | Jeremy Pert |
| Mike Davies | Samantha Thompson (Vice-Chair (Overview)) |
| Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny)) | Mike Worthington |
| Jeremy Oates | Nigel Yates |
| Kath Perry, MBE | |

Also in attendance: Councillor Alan White

Officers: Kate Loader, Chris Ebberley and Lyndsey Bissell

Apologies: John Francis, Bernard Peters and Bob Spencer

Part One

1. Declarations of Interest

None declared at the meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023

The Chairman thanked Councillor Greatorex as the previous Chairman of the Committee and wished him well in his new role.

Resolved: – That, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Integrated Performance – Performance and Finance Final Outturn Report, 2022/23

The Leader of the Council introduced the Integrated Performance and Financial Outturn Report for 2022/23 which summarised the Councils performance and financial position against the Strategic and Delivery Plans.

It was reported that there was an overspend of £11.294m, which had reduced from £11.635m predicted at the end of quarter three.

The main issues discussed by members were:

- Children and Families service remained an area of concern.

However, it was anticipated that the recent investment in Children's services would show a change in services within the next financial year.

- The number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) issued had continued to rise. The reasons for this were not clear and information on the number per district or borough was not readily available. Lockdown and its impact on young people's mental health was believed to be partly responsible. Educational Psychologists and key support workers had been recruited and this should ensure that children receive appropriate support and annual reviews. The Childrens Improvement Board looked at this detail as part of the improvement plan monitoring.
- The warmer homes project would continue to be promoted throughout the County although it was acknowledged that some districts/boroughs had promoted it more than others.
- The changing levels of demand for home care and care homes could not be explained at present.
- The recruitment and retention of care workers was being addressed through the "Social Care workforce strategy". A copy of which would be circulated to members for information.
- There was a discussion on the extension of the Amey contract and how this was being monitored. It was noted that Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee received regular reports updating them on the transformation programme. The Leader reported that he had met with Amey and that providing value for money; an efficient service; and having good customer services was high on their list of priorities. Funding challenges for category 3 highway defects and the need to address potholes in close proximity to each other was discussed. This was being referred to as "Whole Place Repair". Members felt that this repair policy was not adequately communicated to all staff in all divisional teams.
- A dedicated member of communications staff had been allocated to highways service area.
- Household waste sites charging for DIY waste would be looked at, as there seemed to be some confusion over who and when charges were made. This information would be forwarded to members.
- The potential benefits and drawbacks of smaller regional highway repair contracts and capital projects was discussed.
- The slippage of highway capital projects had been discussed with Amey.

Resolved:

- a) That the Integrated Performance and Financial Outturn Report be noted as the position as at the end of year 2022/23.
- b) A copy of the "Social Care workforce strategy" be circulated to members for information.
- c) Information clarifying the position with the Household waste sites

charging for DIY waste would be forwarded to members when available.

4. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report

The Chairman introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2022-23. The report summarised the activity and outcomes for Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year. The report would be considered by Council on 20 July 2023.

The benefits of scrutiny and the activity undertaken over the previous 12 months was discussed. The Chairs of the Committees thanked Officers for their support.

Resolved: That the report be approved and referred to Council for consideration on 20 July 2023.

5. Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Update

The Chairman introduced the report and reminded the Committee that as part of its role as overarching Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee, they had responsibility for developing and agreeing the combined work programme for the Council's O&S function.

Resolved: That the quarterly work programmes be agreed.

6. Draft Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee considered the draft work programme for 2023/24 which had been compiled with items previously agreed by the Committee and a number of regular quarterly or annual reports such as the Integrated performance and finance reports.

It was acknowledged that the Leaders Board was on the work programme as a potential area for scrutiny, but it was felt that this should be considered from the angle of developing policy and member input at an early stage.

It was noted that there was a triangulation meeting arranged for 29 June which may generate additional areas of work.

Resolved: That the work programme be approved.

7. Climate Change Working Group - update

The Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, Councillor Thompson, updated the Committee on the work undertaken by the group since the last meeting. The Working Group had narrowed its focus to look at an area of the Climate Change Action Plan where more work was needed. This was Sequestration – taking carbon from the air. The Working Group would commence evidence gathering on Thursday 29 June 2023 with a visit to Norbury Park Estate Forest and BiFOR research woodland which was set within the grounds of Norbury Park to see and hear evidence relating to tree nurseries, skills required, best practice tree planting and scientific experiments taking place on site.

Cllr Thompson informed the Committee that Cllr Haden had been asked to attend the visit as she had a particular interest in this area.

The membership of the working group was discussed. It was felt that, if all previous members wanted to remain on the group they should be able to do so.

Resolved:

- a) That the update on the working group activity be received.
- b) That Cllrs Smith and Wileman be asked if they wish to remain on the working group.
- c) That subject to councillors confirming their wish to remain on the Group, the membership remain as:
 - Cllr S Thompson (Chair)
 - Cllr C Wileman
 - Cllr N Yates
 - Cllr T Clements
 - Cllr J Pert
 - Cllr B Peters
 - Cllr D Smith

8. Appointment of Members to the Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group

The Chairman asked for volunteers to serve on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Working Group for 2023/24.

Resolved:

That the following members be appointed to the MTFS working group:

- Cllr M Wilcox (Chair)
- Cllr B Peters
- Cllr N Yates
- Cllr J Pert
- Cllr G Heath
- Cllr S Thompson
- Cllr J Oates

Chair