

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	15 May 2017
Report of the	-	Chairman, Councillor Ian Jenkins
Subject	-	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report to Council

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2000 states that where councils operate an executive style administration, there must be at least one committee that has the power to review or scrutinise decisions or actions which affect the authority's area or its residents. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) acts as a critical friend to the Cabinet (Executive) and other local service providers, helping to monitor performance and develop policies. The OSC also has the power to hold the Cabinet to account by "calling in" decisions before or after they have been taken.
2. The OSC cannot make decisions or policies themselves, but they have the power of influence. They make recommendations informed by partner and public opinions, performance information, examples of best practice and professional advice.
3. In accordance with Article 6, paragraph 6.3. (d) of Rother District Council's Constitution, the OSC must report annually to Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods, if appropriate.
4. In compiling this report, consideration has been given to the terms of reference contained within Article 6 of the Constitution and how the OSC has fulfilled its role under these terms.
5. This report covers the period from April 2016 through to the end of March 2017; the report has been prepared before the last scheduled meeting of the OSC for the 2016/17 municipal year has been held.

Scrutiny at Rother

6. Rother District Council has 38 elected Members who represent 20 wards within the boundaries of Rother. With 10 Cabinet Members, this enables 28 Members with the opportunity to be involved in Scrutiny.
7. During the period of this report, 79% of non-Cabinet Members have been involved in Scrutiny either through membership of the Council's Scrutiny Committee or in the Working Group(s).

Structure of Scrutiny Committees

8. During the period of this report, three Working Groups have been in operation. In addition to Scrutiny meetings, the Council can have up to four active Working Groups in place at any one time.

9. There are 20 Members appointed on the OSC and they meet formally eight times a year, are politically balanced in that its make-up reflects that of the Council as a whole and the Committee elects its Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually from amongst its membership.
10. Whilst this report is retrospective, in looking to the future, subject to full Council approval, the OSC will reduce in size from 20 to 12 Members with effect from the new municipal year.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11. Membership as at 24 April 2017:

I.G.F. Jenkins (Chairman), C.J. Saint (Vice-Chairman), A.K. Azad, J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes, R.K. Bird, G.S. Browne, J.J. Carroll, G.C. Curtis, S.H. Earl, Mr D.C. Earl-Williams, S.D. Elford, R.V. Elliston, K.M. Field, Mrs B.A. George, T.W. Graham, B. Kentfield, J. Potts, Mrs S.M. Prochak and G.F. Stevens.

12. The membership changed through the municipal year with Councillor J. Barnes replacing Councillor E.K.L. Rowlinson in October 2016 due to her resignation and the Darwell by-election result and Councillor Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams replacing Councillor D.B. Oliver in October 2016 due to the Collington by-election result. The Committee has met eight times between April 2016 and the end of March 2017. This figure does not include the meeting of the Committee directly following the Annual Council Meeting when the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were elected.
13. Attendance at meetings by Members appointed to the Committee has been good with an average of 88% of the Committee attending the meetings during the period of this report.
14. The average number of reports on the agenda for each meeting was five and the average length of a meeting was two hours and twenty nine minutes. The press attended no meetings and a total of 22 members of the public were in attendance at six of the Committee meetings held during the period of this report.
15. Between April 2016 and the end of March 2017, the OSC received reports on a number of issues including:
 - Affordable Housing – the future challenges
 - AmicusHorizon presentation/update on future housing development, funding, investment and shared working opportunities
 - Beach Hut Working Group
 - Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and update on Policing Structures and Car Parking Issues across the District
 - Community Warden and Pest Control Service
 - Hate Crime
 - Housing Assistance Policy 2016/17 to 2019/20
 - Leisure and Recreational Areas: Commercial Fitness Operators' Registration Scheme
 - Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements – Consultation Response
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22
 - Merger of Audit and Standards Committee

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Re-structure
- Parliamentary Review
- Public Convenience Cleaning Service
- Public Realm Working Group
- Rother District Council Corporate Programme Update
- Scrutiny Training Feedback
- Superfast Broadband Roll-Out presentation by East Sussex County Council
- Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements

16. Standing items reviewed by the Committee included:

- Annual Work Programme
- Call-in and Urgency Procedures
- Draft Annual Report to Council
- Draft Revenue Budget
- Key Performance Targets
- Quarterly Progress Reports on the Annual Performance Plan
- Revenue Budget and Capital Monitoring Programme

Informal Annual Work Programming Meeting

17. The meeting for the 2017/18 municipal year has been scheduled to take place on Monday 22 May at 10:00am in order to highlight Council priorities for the year; all current non-executive Members have been invited to this meeting whether or not they will be appointed to the new OSC. The Work Programme items identified during this informal meeting will be considered alongside the Annual Work Programme report that will be received by the new OSC at its first meeting on 12 June.

Crime and Disorder Committee

18. In 2009, the Scrutiny Committee was designated as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee' under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. This is not a separate working or steering group; it simply means that on an annual basis, as part of their regular Scrutiny business, the OSC reviews the work of Safer Rother Partnership as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee.
19. The opportunities and challenges for 2016/17 included: anti-social behaviour and hate crime, road safety, reducing offending and re-offending, historical and emerging crimes that further impacted on the community e.g. cyber and scams etc., violent crime including violence within a domestic setting. The combined Rother and Hastings Community Safety Partnership (RHCSPP) were working successfully and would continue to be funded via the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. RHCSPP continued to deliver against local priorities, financial resources and monthly Joint Action Group operational meetings were held to specifically deal with Rother's priorities.

Scrutiny Reviews

April 2016

20. **Superfast Broadband Roll-out:** The OSC received a presentation and general overview on the roll-out of Superfast Broadband across the Rother District.

June 2016

21. **Affordable Housing – the Future Challenges:** The OSC received an update on the Council's supply and demand of social housing in Rother and identified future key challenges. The Council did not own any residential accommodation. In 1988, the housing stock had been voluntarily transferred to Rother Homes [now AmicusHorizon (AH)]. Therefore, the Council was reliant on AH and other social landlords operating in the district to meet statutory duties for social housing management and the delivery of new affordable homes. The Council held a Housing Register (HR) which was a waiting list for people who were eligible to be housed in social rented accommodation in Rother. During 2015/16, 549 new registrations were received with 267 requiring one bed properties. Together with partners, the Council was currently researching the future key challenges in order to understand the longer term impact on housing needs and delivery. Members were supportive of this approach and requested that AH be invited to a forthcoming meeting to provide a report on future housing developments, investment and shared working opportunities.

July 2016

22. **Update on Policing Structures and Car Parking issues across the District:** The OSC had requested an update on car parking issues across the district from Sussex Police. Invitations were also extended to the Leaders of Eastbourne and Hastings Borough Councils and Lewes District Council who had already adopted CPE to provide their perspective on the successes and pitfalls experienced. Representatives from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council were also invited to provide their perspective on adopting CPE without charging for on-street parking. After a thorough debate, it was proposed and agreed to re-invite representatives from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and invite representatives from Wealden District Council (WDC) to a future meeting to discuss the potential of introducing CPE to both districts. This has been scheduled to be held on 28 November 2016.

September 2016

23. **Hate Crime:** Matt West, Crime Co-ordinator for Sussex Police and Safer East Sussex Team updated the OSC on the Council's obligations regarding hate crime issues. The Council had a statutory requirement along with partner agencies to work together to formulate and implement plans, set out priorities and strategies to tackle crime and disorder which included addressing hate crime. Since the European Referendum on 23 June 2013, Sussex Police had received no reports of hate crime, with only 13 reports across East Sussex directly linked to BREXIT. The Council would continue to collaborate with local partners and actions implemented to include the Government's new initiative 'Action Against Hate'. The statistical data was encouraging, however the OSC felt it may not be a true reflection of the number of hate crime incidents actually being experienced. It was agreed the Council should not remain complacent, should actively promote awareness and reporting procedures, and assist all partner agencies with combating hate crime across the district.

November 2016

24. **Civil Parking Enforcement:** As agreed in July 2016, representatives from ESCC were invited to provide further clarity on the introduction of CPE and representatives from WDC to provide their perspective and position. WDC's view was not to support the introduction of CPE. Members were given the opportunity to submit a number of questions to ESCC and WDC prior to the meeting. After discussion, the OSC agreed that further investigation was required. It was therefore recommended that officers work with ESCC to produce a draft business case to show the implications of CPE and to further investigate traffic management options throughout the district. An update has been scheduled to be held on 20 March 2017.

January 2017

25. **AmicusHorizon:** The OSC received a presentation and update on future housing development, funding, investment, shared working opportunities and imminent merger plans with Viridian Housing from AmicusHorizon.
26. The OSC also scrutinised the performance of services and the resources they use on a quarterly basis. In conjunction, the OSC looked into the wider, strategic implications for the district and the lives of residents that are represented by individual indicators and targets. Just some of the themes addressed over the period were:
- **Benefit Claims:** Members debated the issues experienced regarding targets not being met for processing benefit claims. External contractors were assisting with the backlog of work.
 - **Broadband/Electronic Financial Transactions:** Members agreed that improving internet access to both residents and businesses would increase and encourage commercial enterprises to the district. Members would be receiving a superfast broadband update in April 2017.
 - **Business Rates:** Members raised concerns and questions regarding the financial burdens small businesses might experience with increased rateable values and whether the Council was in a position to assist these organisations financially should they require it. Advice was disseminated about rate relief opportunities and Members noted that movements in business rates would have a significant impact on the Council's income, highlighting the importance of delivering commercial regeneration. Members requested that they received a report on the Council's strategy for attracting businesses/commercial activities to the district.
 - **Re-use, Composting & Recycling Rate for Household Waste:** The OSC debated the underperforming recycling targets and questioned whether these targets were realistically achievable. To increase recycling performance, Members were advised that an extensive communications campaign focusing on reducing residual waste and increasing performance was being developed by the Joint Waste Partnership Communications group. Following the campaign recycling rates were improving.
 - **Telephone Calls Answered by the Contact Centre:** Members questioned the response times for answering telephone calls and the difficulties experienced by some residents who had been unable to get through by telephone. Customers were being encouraged to communicate with the Council via on-line facilities and a web-chat system was in operation. Projects would be underway to review the Council's

correspondence, where plain English and simplified information would be considered.

- **Temporary Accommodation:** Members were advised that access to temporary accommodation continued to be an issue with placements increasing due to large numbers of homeless applications being received against a low number of vacancies being available from the Council's housing partners. It was essential that the Council worked with all relevant agencies to support people in housing need. Members also debated the amount of time households were spending in temporary accommodation and noted that finding suitable accommodation remained a concern/issue with some families being placed in neighbouring authorities.
- **Website/Communications:** Members were encouraged by the significant increase of hits made by the public on the Council's website. It was apparent that Rother's strategy to increase and redirect the public to contact the Council via the website was succeeding. The Council's 'My Alerts' initiative to send email messages to residents on relevant Council issues was well received, effective and extremely successful, and had mitigated the level of customer contact received.

Recommendations to Cabinet

27. During the period of the report a total of 16 recommendations were made to Cabinet. These recommendations were supported by Cabinet with a number of the recommendations made being supported with minor amendments. Details of all recommendations made to Cabinet by the OSC can be seen at Appendix 1.

Call-In

28. The OSC has not found it necessary to Call-In any decisions of the Cabinet for further scrutiny during the last year. The annual report on the Call-In and Urgency Procedures can be seen elsewhere on the Agenda for this meeting.

Working Groups

29. During the period of this report, the OSC established two new working groups: Beach Huts Working Group (BHWG) and Service Level Agreement (SLA) Task and Finish Group.
30. At the Informal Annual Scrutiny Work Programming Meeting held in June 2013, it was requested for this Annual Report to Council to incorporate a cumulative examination of the results of working groups, when they have concluded their work, to see if their recommendations and outcomes have delivered their set objectives.

Public Realm Working Group (ongoing)

31. Established in July 2015, the Public Realm Working Group (PRWG) was tasked with carrying out a robust examination of current practices of the management of the public realm across the district, develop a clear Public Realm Management Strategy and consider improvement approaches and any potential devolution opportunities. The Group comprises of Councillors S.H. Earl, R.V. Elliston, K.M. Field, B. Kentfield, C.J. Saint (Chairman), G.F. Stevens and M.R. Watson whilst undertaking its Terms of Reference. There was a reduction in the membership due to Councillor Mrs Hart's appointment to Cabinet in May 2016.

32. The PRWG has met six times and the following recommendations were presented to the OSC on 17 October 2016 for onward recommendation to Cabinet on 7 November 2016:

That the OSC recommends to Cabinet that:

- a Public Realm Strategic Framework for Rother be commissioned, with investment costs to be met from reserves and partner contributions where possible;
- a set of principles for routine and responsive maintenance of Rother District Council's public realm assets be drawn up;
- a public realm volunteer involvement scheme for the upkeep of Rother District Council's public realm assets be implemented with costs to be met from existing budgets;
- a public engagement plan for enhancing civic pride through awareness raising and self-help be drawn up and implemented;
- civic societies in Rother be encouraged to work together;
- targeted approach to the use of amenity enforcement powers at key localities be developed;
- findings on traffic issues be conveyed to Hastings and Rother Safer Road Partnership; and
- a programme of major public realm works schemes be sought to be developed, in conjunction with the highways authorities and subject to funding opportunities.

OUTCOME: The OSC agreed all recommendations which were fully endorsed by Cabinet.

As the terms of reference had not been fulfilled, it was agreed that the PRWG should not be disbanded, as further work would be required to assist with the creation / establishment of Rother's Public Realm Strategic Framework.

SLA Task and Finish Group (completed objectives / disbanded)

33. The SLA Task and Finish Group was established to comprehensively review a number of existing SLAs with organisations due to expire in March 2017; receiving detailed reports from the SLA Monitoring Officers and Member Representatives; hearing first hand evidence from five of the larger organisations and receiving financial information. The main desired outcome of the Group was to conduct a thorough and fair review of the SLAs and potentially achieve a saving for the Council whilst securing much needed services. The Group comprised of Councillors Mrs M.L. Barnes, S.H. Earl and M.R. Watson.
34. The SLA Task and Finish Group met twice and the following recommendations were presented to the OSC on 28 November 2016 for onward recommendation to Cabinet on 5 December 2016:

That the OSC be asked to recommend to Cabinet the renewal of the following four year Voluntary Sector SLAs (unless another term stipulated) from 1 April 2017, and subject to a six month termination clause:

- Rother District Citizens Advice Bureau – £85,000 per annum.
- Hastings and Rother Mediation Service – £8,400 per annum to include work place mediation support for the Council.

- Hastings Advice and Representation Centre – £16,160 per annum.
- Rother Voluntary Action – £38,000 per annum to include provision for a mid-term review of:
 - an extended volunteering co-ordination role, subject to a business case and CCG, Public Health or other match-funding;
 - an additional role in the RDC community grant scheme for Rother Voluntary Action; and
 - match-funding for project(s) relating to Bexhill Central community, should an opportunity arise.
- Bexhill Museum – £8,500 per annum two year SLA with an additional two year term subject to the Museum providing a business case showing that they have actively explored and intend to implement measures aimed at increasing revenue.
- Unrestricted contribution of £1,000 per annum to Action in Rural Sussex, Hastings Furniture Service and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

OUTCOME: The OSC agreed all recommendations which was endorsed by Cabinet with the following amendments: that all SLAs were fixed for three years from April 2017 to March 2020; with the exception of Bexhill Museum which would be fixed for one-year, with an additional two-year term subject to the Museum providing a business case including a comprehensive marketing strategy; all would be subject to detailed terms and conditions; and an additional clause to each SLA: that a review of the agreement be instigated should the organisation experience any significant change in circumstances e.g. relocation of premises, material financial/budgetary variance etc.

Having fulfilled its terms of reference, the SLA Task and Finish Group was disbanded.

Beach Hut Working Group (completed objectives / disbanded)

35. The BHWG was established to consider chargeable services for beach hut licenses, processes, management, seafront locations and financial opportunities for the Council. In making their recommendations, the BHWG had taken into account the reputational risk of the Council in relation to the removal of the waiting list for beach huts and the risk of overdevelopment through additional beach hut sites. The Group comprised of Councillors J.J. Carroll, T.W. Graham, D.B. Oliver and M.R. Watson.
36. The BHWG met once and the following recommendations were presented to the OSC on 17 October 2016 for onward recommendation to Cabinet on 7 November 2016:

That the OSC be asked to recommend to Cabinet that the following be approved:

- the transfer of licences be permitted on the open market and the current waiting list arrangement terminated;
- the transfer fee for a beach hut site licence be amended to three times the annual fee or 10% of the sale price, whichever is higher;
- the commercial lease and licence arrangement be retained but market tested to establish the value for future charges, the results of which to be reported to the Executive Director of Resources who has delegated powers to set lease and licence fees;

- the current commercial licence that expired on the 30 September 2016 to be renewed with the current licensee to the 30 September 2017 to allow for market testing to be undertaken;
- to apply for planning permission for the reinstatement of 30 beach huts at Glyne Gap to produce an additional £15,000 income per annum based on current licence fees;
- the suitability of the area behind the sea wall at the foot of Galley Hill be investigated and, subject to investigations, the Executive Director of Business Operations submit a planning application for 16-24 beach huts. This area might produce an additional income of between £8,000 to £12,000 income per year based on current licence fees;
- the 12 vacant plots at East Parade be licensed, at an estimated additional £6,000 additional income per year based on current licence fees;
- subject to further investigation of historical planning consent refusal, the feasibility of obtaining planning permission for additional beach hut sites along West Parade be investigated and reported back to Committee;
- the feasibility of obtaining planning permission for between 12 and 25 beach huts at the Beaulieu Road site not be approved; and
- design and costs of beach huts be investigated with a view to placing beach huts on vacant beach hut sites and selling on to new lease holders. This recommendation could provide a one-off income of approximately £5,000 per new site.
- the Executive Director of Business Operations be authorised to submit the recommended planning applications on behalf of the Council.

OUTCOME: The OSC agreed all recommendations and Cabinet endorsed all with an additional recommendation that a review be carried out in 2018 to assess progress, as well as reviewing the feasibility of beach hut provision at Beaulieu Road.

Having fulfilled its terms of reference, the BHWG was disbanded.

Steering Groups

Value for Money Steering Group

37. The Value for Money Steering Group (VfMSG) was established in 2009 as a response to Members' requests to scrutinise areas of the Council's budget in order to make recommendations on where potential savings / service reductions could be obtained.
38. The Membership of the VfMSG comprises of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Value for Money (Councillor Lord Ampthill), Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the OSC (Councillors I.G.F. Jenkins and C.J. Saint respectively), the Chairman of Audit (Councillor M. Mooney) plus one Member nominated from the main opposing party (Councillor D.B. Oliver).
39. The VfMSG has not met during 2016/17 due to the savings achieved in previous years. It is suggested that this group be disbanded as a formal Steering Group as the work has largely been taken up within the Rother 2020 project and regular reports will be made to the OSC and Cabinet on progress. If there are specific issues these can be dealt with through the establishment of a Task and Finish Group.

Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group

40. The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group (BTCSG) has been established by Cabinet to deliver the vision and objectives of the Bexhill Town Centre Strategy 2013; the Strategy seeks to collaborate with key groups and agencies in the area in its delivery plan.
41. The overarching aims of the town centre strategy are to achieve enhanced commercial vitality; to reduce levels of deprivation and to maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment and public realm. In carrying out its purpose the BTCSG will engage fully with town centre communities and drive collaboration between the key agencies with responsibilities in this area.
42. By working with the community, businesses and partners, there is an opportunity to create a positive, attractive identity for the town centre that will see enhanced commercial and social vitality, reduce levels of deprivation and attract innovative and entrepreneurial people.
43. The BTCSG comprises: Councillors I.R. Hollidge (Chairman), Mrs J.M. Hughes, B. Kentfield and C.R. Maynard and the following officers: Dr Anthony Leonard, Executive Director of Business Operations and Emma Wray, Partnership Co-ordinator.
44. In August 2015, Cabinet agreed the revised Terms of Reference.

Overview and Scrutiny Chairman's Statement

45. Members will see from this year's Scrutiny Report that the subject matter has been wide and varied. My thanks go to all Members of the Committee. Specifically, I would like Council to note the working group regarding the Public Realm chaired in the first instance by Cllr Sally-Ann Hart that produced outcomes that may set the level for future working groups.
46. As Chairman of the OSC, I have for some time expressed concerns over the actual member size of the Committee, I hope therefore that full Council will be supportive and approve the reduction in its size, with more focus being placed on working groups allowing all Members to play their part in the Scrutiny process of this Council through their skills and advice.
47. I would like to thank Democratic Services for their continued support, and in particular Julie Hollands, as well as my Vice-Chairman Cllr Chris Saint for his support and advice and for reading my comments at this meeting.

Councillor Ian Jenkins
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to produce this report would be in breach of Article 6, paragraph 6.3. (d) of the Constitution.

REFERENCES TO CABINET

From April 2016 until March 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) referred the following reports to Cabinet:

18 APRIL 2016

1. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCE CLEANING SERVICE:** The OSC considered the current shared Public Convenience Cleaning Contract with Eastbourne and Hastings Borough Councils which was due to end on 31 December 2016. Currently 30 units on the cleaning schedule with an annual provision of £183,900 (£6,000 per unit). The OSC recommended that proposed the new contract ran for a period of five years from 1 April 2017, if extension was agreed to 31 March 2022 with the option to extend a further two years to 31 March 2024.

Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendation.

2. **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS – CONSULTATION RESPONSE:** The OSC considered the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) draft recommendations for Rother District Council (RDC) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The LGBCE had supported RDC's proposals submitted in November 2015 apart from a few minor warding pattern amendments in relation to some of the rural areas. The OSC welcomed the proposed new electoral arrangements for Rother and recommended that the proposed two new Battle Wards be renamed as North Battle – Netherfield and Whatlington; and South Battle and Telham. ESCC divisional electoral changes in relation to those within RDC's boundary were also supported.

Cabinet considered the OSC's comments and were supportive of the recommendation submitted.

13 JUNE 2016

No items were referred to Cabinet from this meeting.

25 JULY 2016

No items were referred to Cabinet from this meeting.

12 SEPTEMBER 2016

3. **ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PROGRAMME:** The OSC were updated on progress of 29 key projects linked to the four aims within the Council's Corporate Programme. Six projects had been completed, five were currently in planning phase with completion due between 2018 and 2021 and seven projects were due for completion in 2016/17. The cost to delivery all projects amounted to £19.5m, however not all funding had been secured. The Committee were shown a short video which highlighted a number of key project milestones. Issues regarding staffing resources were raised and it was confirmed that to meet project timescales / deadlines reassignment / redeployment had and would be applied and additional resources introduced,

where appropriate. Members requested an update on the East Sussex County Council led superfast broadband roll-out project; unfortunately this was not available at the meeting. It was therefore agreed to recommend that Cabinet be requested to ask East Sussex County Council to provide an update on the progress of the roll-out of superfast broadband across the district.

Cabinet considered the OSC's comments and were supportive of the recommendation submitted.

4. **PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT: FIRST QUARTER 2016/17:** Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director of Business Operations on the First Quarter 2016/17 Performance Progress Report. Members were asked to consider the target set for the Key Performance Indicator – Conversions from 'My Alerts' Email to Website Hits which had been miscalculated and revised figure was proposed. The OSC recommended that Cabinet be requested to approve that the target be changed from 265,240 to 115,000 website hits.

Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendation.

5. **HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY 2016/17 TO 2019/20:** The OSC considered the updated draft Housing Renewal Assistance Policy (HRAP) which set out the financial tools available to the Council for providing housing renewal help to households in the Rother district and included the flexibility of how non ring-fenced Disability Facility Grants could be spent. The OSC welcomed the initiative, were fully supportive and recommended to Cabinet that the HRAP be approved and that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, to introduce and develop new types of assistance that enabled existing and new sources of funding to be targeted at eligible clients.

Cabinet considered the OSC's comments and were supportive of the recommendations submitted.

17 OCTOBER 2016

6. **THE PUBLIC REALM IN ROTHER: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP:** (see paragraphs 31 to 32 in main report).
7. **BEACH HUTS: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BEACH HUT WORKING GROUP:** (see paragraphs 35 to 36 in main report).
8. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2021/22:** The OSC considered the report of the Executive Director of Resources on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22 which set out the main financial issues affecting the Council's Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Reserves.

Cabinet considered the OSC's comments and recommended that Council formally adopt the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22.

9. **LEISURE AND RECREATIONAL AREAS: COMMERCIAL FITNESS OPERATORS' REGISTRATION SCHEME:** The OSC gave consideration to the report of the Executive Director of Business Operations which detailed the proposal of a voluntary registration scheme for Commercial Fitness Operators. It had become apparent that a growing number of commercial operators offering personal fitness classes and training were using Council owned land to carry out these activities. Unauthorised usage had raised safety, control, risk management and insurance concerns. Members sought further clarity on a number of issues and therefore recommended that Cabinet not adopt the proposed scheme. Officers were requested to reconsider/rework the scheme to address the highlighted issues and report back at a future meeting.

Cabinet were supportive of the OSC's recommendation submitted.

10. **MERGER OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE:** Following changes instigated by the Localism Act, it was proposed that the Audit and Standards Committee be merged to ensure efficiency savings for the Council. Alternative suggestions were proposed and after consideration the OSC recommended that from May 2017, the Standards Committee be merged with the Licensing and General Purposes Committee.

Cabinet acknowledged all of the options proposed and the OSC's recommendation and, after receiving further information and clarification regarding governance, membership and good practice matters, agreed that the Audit and Standards Committee be combined from May 2017.

11. **PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW:** Cabinet had tasked the OSC to formulate the Council's response to the Boundary Commission for England's Parliamentary Review which proposed to reduce the South East region constituency seats to 83 which would mean cross county changes to the Rother District. The OSC formulated their response and recommended to Cabinet not to support the creation of a new constituency of High Weald which crossed county boundaries between East Sussex and Kent.

Cabinet considered the OSC's comments and were generally supportive of the recommendation, however further refinement was proposed and agreed.

12. **VOLUNTARY SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS:** (see paragraphs 33 to 34 in main report).

30 JANUARY 2017

13. **KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2017/18:** The OSC considered the report of the Key Performance Targets for 2017/18, which proposed that the Council measured seven Key Performance Indicators (KPI): housing benefits – new claims processed on time; housing benefits – existing claims processed on time; five year land supply; number of individuals supported through local employment and skills plan; homelessness applications received; number of affordable homes delivered (gross); and recycling rate from household waste collections which focused on key outcomes within the Corporate Plan and the impact of both the local economy and efficient delivery of key services to Rother's residents, with in the Council's resources.

Cabinet were supportive of the OSC's recommendations and agreed that the seven KPIs selected would adequately reflect a review of the Council's performance.

12. **DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18:** The OSC considered the draft Revenue Budget proposals which detailed the financial settlement figures for 2017/18 and made recommendations to Cabinet, to be considered at its meeting on 13 February 2017. Members were supportive of a £5 per annum or 3% Council Tax increase and suggested that Cabinet consider the feedback results of the public consultation, prior to formulating its budget proposals to Council.

Cabinet noted the OSC's comments and agreed to increase Council Tax by 3% or £5 per annum.

20 MARCH 2017

13. **Community Warden and Pest Control Service:** The OSC considered an update on the future service provision of the Council's shared Pest Control Service with Wealden District Council (WDC), as well as the opportunity to incorporate a Community Warden post. Three options were proposed: 1) cease providing the service; 2) contract out; 3) to reduce the number of Pest Control Officer posts to 1.5fte with the 0.5fte directed to that of a Community Warden. After debate and subject to WDC's agreement, the Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve Option 3 for a two year trial period until March 2019 and that both Pest Control Officers be trained as Community Wardens.

Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendation.

14. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURE:** The OSC considered its working arrangements. Following feedback from Scrutiny Training and comments received from South East Employer's reaccreditation process for the Charter for Elected Member Development it was considered appropriate to review the OSC current composition and operation with a view to enhancing the scrutiny function. Members considered, size, frequency and timings of the meetings, as well as the opportunity to utilise Task and Finish Group more. The Committee agreed with the recommendations proposed with the following amendments: reduced to 12 Members; the number of meetings be retained at eight per annum; full Council determine the start time (daytime); all working groups be known as Task and Finish Groups; the OSC Chairman cannot be elected as Chairman of a Task and Finish Group; and substitute Members be appointed by Group Leaders to attend Task and Finish Group meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Cabinet noted the OSC's comments and agreed all of the recommendations apart from the start time of the meeting, which they considered should be set by the OSC at their first meeting in May.