

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 January 2018

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 29 January 2018 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors P.N. Osborne (Chairman), S.D. Elford (Vice-Chairman), J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes (ex-officio), G.S. Browne, C.A. Clark, G.C. Curtis, S.H. Earl, R.V. Elliston, J. Potts, Mrs S.M. Prochak and M.R. Watson.

Other Members present: Councillors Lord Ampthill (in part), J.J. Carroll (in part), K.P. Dixon, I.G.F. Jenkins (in part) and Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green.

Advisory Officers present: Executive Director of Business Operations, Executive Director of Resources, Service Manager Community and Economy, Service Manager – Environmental Services and Licensing (in part), Financial Services Manager (in part) and Democratic Services Officer.

Also present: Chief Inspector Steve Curry (in part) and Inspector Dan Russell (in part) – Sussex Police and Rother and Hastings Community Safety Partnership and 4 members of the public.

OSC17/42. **MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 November 2017 as a correct record of the proceedings.

OSC17/43. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G.F. Stevens.

OSC17/44. **CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SAFER ROTHER PARTNERSHIP AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND COMMUNITY SAFETY** (5)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Chief Inspector Steve Curry and Inspector Dan Russell of Sussex Police and the joint Rother and Hastings Community Safety Partnership (RHCSPP) who provided an update on the activities which RHCSPP had carried out over the past year. Councillor Mrs Kirby-Green, the Council's nominated representative and Chairman of the RHCSPP was also in attendance.

During the presentation the following key points were noted:

- Sussex Police had updated their recorded crime procedures in-line with national standards (Home Office Counting Rules), which changed the way some crimes were counted. As a result an

increase in reported crime numbers was realised across the country;

- Sussex Police had been graded “good” with an accuracy of 95% during their last HM Inspectorate of Constabulary assessment;
- during the last 12 months and up to the end of November 2017, Rother had seen an increase of 18.2% reported incidents to Sussex Police, which equated to an additional 784 crimes;
- overall crime was considered low in Sussex, however Members noted the rise in domestic abuse, sexual offences, burglary, public disorder, common assault, vehicle crime and shoplifting numbers;
- significant challenge for Sussex Police was to manage demand with fewer personnel;
- the three main policing objectives were ‘Threat’, ‘Harm’ and ‘Risk’;
- the RHCSP was monitoring all crimes to identify preventative action to be taken;
- key initiatives delivered during 2017/18 to reduce crime included: impact of crime and anti-social behaviour, white ribbon campaigns, crime reduction for young people, drug taking, victim domestic abuse support, rough sleeper / street community assistance, road safety initiatives, anti-social behaviour awareness training and tackling modern slavery. Work had also been undertaken to improve communications by using various social media platforms;
- RHCSP priorities for 2018/19 would be to deal with: anti-social behaviour and hate crime, road safety, reducing offending and re-offending and fear of crime;
- several initiatives were currently in operation to improve local policing response times; these included Operation Bluebird (target crimes at key times, where required); Operation Papio (shoplifting awareness / prevention); targeting organised crime groups; increasing youth engagement, Operation Discovery (tackling modern slavery and exploitation); and Community Speedwatch (road safety awareness / improvements);
- purchased an additional 10 automatic license plate recognition cameras for increased coverage across rural areas of the district;
- joint opportunities proposed for the future were public reassurance, improved communications with Neighbourhood Watch, increased coverage and exchange of information, as well as enhancing community safety through partnerships; and
- community intelligence was a significant resource for the Police, as they continuously relied on the public to assist with collating key information.

The Service Manager – Environmental Services and Licensing advised that training sessions on the tools and powers available to address anti-social behaviour e.g. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO), Community Protection Warning and Community Protection Notices had been delivered for all relevant staff. It was also noted that following discussion with Sussex Police, in November 2017 a new model for policing across the district was adopted. Work was currently ongoing to agree joint working practices with the police to maximise the effectiveness of all available resources. RHCSP had also recruited a full-time Community Safety Assistant to assist both Hastings and Rother’s Community Safety Co-ordinators to deliver joint board work, support Joint Action Groups, as well as the Road Safety Group and

other associated actions groups. In December 2017, the Community Safety Co-ordinator transferred to the Environmental and Licensing Department as part of interdepartmental work to deliver the Council's response to anti-social behaviour, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Members had an opportunity to put forward questions and the following comments were raised / discussed:

- it was clarified that as well as the Community Warden, 15 other Council officers were authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices relating to PSPOs;
- concern was raised regarding the continuous reduction of funding to Sussex Police and the reduction of and changing roles of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs);
- absence of PCSOs was particularly noticeable across the rural areas of the district; it was considered essential that resources were upheld to tackle crime in rural locations;
- assurance was given that the Police would respond to all relevant calls and, in particular, where vulnerable people were concerned;
- a multi-partner approach assisted Sussex Police in tackling crime across the district. Chief Inspector Curry encouraged all Members to support Rother's Neighbourhood Watch scheme <http://www.rothernhw.co.uk/>. Edward Kemp, the Chairman was contactable on Chairman@rothernhw.co.uk; and
- Neighbourhood Watch was a significant resource for the police and opened up opportunities for further collaboration and exploration. Members were asked to encourage constituents through their Wards, local community groups and, in particular, Parish and Town Councils to support, set-up and volunteer for Neighbourhood Watch schemes or relevant reporting systems across the district to assist with crime prevention.

Councillor Mrs Kirby-Green advised that the joint RHCSP was working successfully and delivered interventions to deal with crime and raised awareness across Rother. With the reduction of funding, RHCSP would need to continue to review the Partnership's priorities and work practices over the coming years.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Steve Curry and Inspector Dan Russell for their update and praised the outstanding partnership working that was taking place.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the presentation be noted;
- 2) Members encourage constituents through their Wards, local community groups and, in particular, Parish and Town Councils to support, set-up and volunteer for Neighbourhood Watch schemes or relevant reporting systems across the district to assist with crime prevention; and
- 3) the Council's work in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety be noted.

OSC17/45. **DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19**
(6.1)

Members gave consideration to the report of the Executive Director of Resources on the draft Revenue Budget which detailed the financial settlement figures for 2018/19. The Committee had been requested to consider the draft budget and make recommendations to Cabinet, to be considered at its meeting on 12 February 2018. To ensure that Members were provided with a clear identifiable core cost for each service, all budgets were shown at "Net Operational Expenditure Levels", excluding capital charges, central costs and support service recharges.

The Financial Services Manager provided an updated outline of the budget and Members noted the main considerations, constraints and variations within the budget setting process.

The Government settlement was announced on the 19 December 2017. The Government confirmed the business rates baseline and Revenue support Grant for 2018/19 which was in line with the four year grant settlement. From 2019/20, the Council would be solely dependent on income from business rates. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched a fair funding review consultation which was due to close on 12 March 2018. The review would calculate the new baseline funding levels based on an up-to-date assessment of the relative needs and resources of local authorities. Business rates would be redistributed according to the outcome of the new assessment, alongside the resetting of business rates baselines, subject to suitable transitional measures. Members agreed it was important that the Council fully engaged in the consultation process and highlighted Rother's specific priorities / needs.

The Government had confirmed the Council's Revenue Support Grant for 2018/19 as £72,506 which was consistent with the four year settlement deal announced in December 2015.

Rother's New Homes Bonus (NHB) would be £714,306 for 2018/19 which included an additional grant of £11,938 payable over four years.

The Business Rate Retention baseline for 2018/19 was £2,284,959 which was used by the Government to determine the safety net for the Council i.e. the minimum income the Council could retain from business rates before the Government would provide additional funding. For 2018/19, the safety net for Rother would be £2,216,410. The estimated retention of business rates included in the draft Revenue Budget was £3,116,000 which included compensatory grants in relation to additional reliefs previously granted by the Government. During 2018/19, the East Sussex Business Rate Pool would be reforming and Rother would be re-joining. The aim was to incentivise authorities to attract more businesses into their areas with the prospect that the growth in business rates would be retained locally. This extra resource would be specifically ring-fenced for economic regeneration activities.

The total Housing Benefit Administration Grant was confirmed as £232,665 which was inclusive of Universal Credit funding. The Homelessness New Burdens Grant was confirmed as £40,704 and £176,852 for Flexible Homelessness Support.

The Government had confirmed that planning fees could be increased by 20% from 17 January 2018 therefore the Council could achieve estimated additional income of £130,000 during 2018/19.

The report also detailed other changes to the draft Revenue Budget which included £25,000 payment to Action in Rural Sussex, additional £14,000 grant towards homelessness, transfer of £61,000 for the Community Grant Scheme to the Capital Programme and £17,880 reduction in the Local Council Tax Support Grant.

All of the above minor changes had been consolidated into the 2018/19 draft Revenue Budget which was appended to the report at Appendix A.

The Committee acknowledged that movements in business rates would have a significant impact on the Council's income, highlighting the importance of delivering commercial regeneration. Therefore, Members sought clarity on the Council's strategy for attracting businesses / commercial activities to the district. The Executive Director of Resources advised commercial activity was projected to increase as a result of the North East Bexhill and Barnhorn Road developments.

The Committee was supportive of a £5 per annum (2.95%) Council Tax increase which would deliver additional income of £186,305; an average annual charge of £174.32. Members suggested that Cabinet consider the feedback results of the public consultation appended at Appendix 3 to the report, prior to formulating its proposals to Council on the draft Revenue Budget for 2018/19.

The Council faced major challenges with the significant reduction of Government funding and volatility in business rate income. To ensure a sound financial future, Members noted that the Council would need to uphold a robust financial strategy.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to receive the comments made by the Committee when it formulates its proposals to Council on the 2018/19 draft Revenue Budget, at its meeting on 12 February 2018.

OSC17/46. **KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2018/19**
(7.1)

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Business Operations which gave details of the proposed Key Performance Targets for 2018/19.

Managing performance to deliver the best possible outcomes within the resources available was a core function for Rother District Council. The way in which the Council approached this task was to set a series

of annual performance targets against the Council's Corporate Plan (2014-2021) four Core Aims (an Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council; Sustainable Economic Prosperity; Stronger, Safer Communities; and A Quality Physical Environment).

Members had previously agreed that a small set of carefully selected corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be reviewed each year by the Scrutiny Committee. Eight KPIs had been identified and were proposed for 2018/19, 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, within the Council's resources. It was noted that proposed indicator 3) Homelessness Applications Received, measured the volume of demand for homelessness services and as such was not within the Council's direct power to reduce. It was noted that taken in conjunction with indicator 4) Prevention of Homelessness, Members would gain an insight into how this issue was being addressed.

Aside from the eight KPIs to be reported quarterly, other indicators informing Service Managers of performance would be reported by exception to the Scrutiny Committee where they were exceeding or significantly missing their target.

In conclusion, Members agreed that the KPIs selected would adequately reflect a review of the Council's performance. Any future improvements or actions would be proposed to Cabinet to ensure the targets were met.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to approve the following corporate Key Performance Indicators and their performance targets for 2018/19:

- 1) **Benefits Claims Processing: New Claims** – Target: 35 days.
- 2) **Benefits Claims Processing: Changes of Circumstances** – Target: 20 days.
- 3) **Homelessness Applications Received** – Target: 300.
- 4) **Prevention of Homelessness per 1,000 households** – Target: 5.
- 5) **Households in Temporary Accommodation** – Target: 60.
- 6) **Net Additional Homes Provided** – Target: 238.
- 7) **Affordable Housing Provided** – Target: 10 (expected delivery) 121 (based on meeting Local Plan target).
- 8) **Return on Investment Properties** – Target: 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 6% each year.

OSC17/47. **WORK PROGRAMME**
(8)

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme and the following points were noted:

- The findings and recommendations of the Housing Issues Task and Finish Group to be presented at the meeting scheduled to be held on 23 July 2018.
- A review of Tourism Event Funding be considered at the meeting scheduled to be held on 11 June 2018.
- A review of Special Expenses be added to "Items for Consideration".
- Tourism Strategy be considered during the 2019/20 Work Programme.

Members were reminded that the informal Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting had been arranged for Tuesday 22 May 2018 at 3:00pm in the Council Chamber and all non-executive Members had been invited to attend. At this meeting Members would give consideration to the items they wished to see included within the Work Programme and to consider these with the Strategic Management Team and Service Managers in attendance.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme, as attached at Appendix A, as amended, be agreed.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8:45pm

OSC180129/jh

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WORK PROGRAMME 2017 – 2018		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM (Capitalised)	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
19.03.18	CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Bexhill Hive • Performance Progress Report: Third Quarter 2017/18 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to January 2018 	Hollidge
23.04.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council • Review of Task and Finish Groups / Outcomes 	-

WORK PROGRAMME 2018 – 2019		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM (Capitalised)	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
11.06.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Work Programme • Performance Progress Report: Year End and Fourth Quarter 2017/18 • Tourism Event Funding Review 	
23.07.18	HOUSING ISSUES TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT	Hughes
10.09.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: First Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to July 2018 	Ampthill
15.10.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2023/24 	Ampthill
26.11.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: Second Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to September 2018 	Ampthill
28.01.19	DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20 KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2019/20	Ampthill Maynard
18.03.19	CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE: TO RECEIVE AN REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: Third Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to January 2019 	Ampthill Kirby-Green
29.04.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council • Review of Task and Finish Groups / Outcomes 	-

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Portfolio Holder Updates • Rother Public Realm Strategic Framework progress [Minute OSC16/25 – 17 October 2016] 	

- Special Expenses Review [Minute OSC17/47 – 29 January 2018]
- Tourism Strategy (creation of a Tourism Task and Finish Group) to be held during 2019/20 [Minute OSC17/13 – 24 July 2017/ OSC17/47 – 29 January 2018]
- Waste and Recycling Contract Update