

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 April 2021

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held remotely on Monday 26 April 2021 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors P.N. Osborne (Chairman), Mrs V. Cook (Vice-Chairman), J. Barnes, J.J. Carroll, C.A. Clark, P.C. Courtel, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, S.J. Errington, P.J. Gray, C.A. Madeley and C.R. Maynard.

Other Members present: Councillors G.C. Curtis, K.P. Dixon, K.M. Field and K.M. Harmer.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Assistant Director Resources, Head of Service Acquisitions, Transformation & Regeneration, Head of Service Neighbourhood Services and Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: 27 members of the public, via the YouTube live broadcast.

OSC20/54 **MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 March and 12 April 2021, at a later date, as correct records of the proceedings.

OSC20/55 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Drayson and Malcolm Johnston, Chief Executive.

It was noted that Councillor Stevens was present as a substitute for Councillor Mooney.

OSC20/56 **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:

Courtel Agenda Item 5 – Personal interest in so far as he was a permit holder for a car park in Bexhill Central ward.

Field Agenda Item 5 – Personal interest as a Member of East Sussex County Council.

OSC20/57 **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Members received and considered the report of the Head of Service Neighbourhood Services which detailed the recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG). Councillor Cook, Chairman of the OSCPT&FG, thanked Members of the Group for their hard work and paid tribute to the officers involved for their support.

The OSCPT&FG was established in October 2020 to monitor the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on the level of use of Council owned off-street car parks and consider any changes to charges, hours of operation and permits, whilst taking into account the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the car parks.

The OSCPT&FG had met on four occasions during the six months since it was established in October 2020, received a number of presentations from officers advising on monthly car park income data and the current car park usage compared to previous years. Further information was gathered from Parish and Town Councils (P&TCs), local businesses, community groups and sports clubs most likely to be impacted by CPE and the use of car parks, via a written 'call for evidence'.

The 'call for evidence' from P&TCs, local businesses, community groups and sports clubs most likely to be impacted by CPE and the use of car parks, elicited a total of 40 responses up to the closing date of 12 March 2021. The report summarised the main findings, but it was noted by Members that this information together with car park usage data did not provide an accurate base on which to make decisions due to the third COVID-19 lockdown being in place from December 2020 to April 2021, which had severely restricted people's movements and therefore the level of use of car parks. It was therefore suggested in the report that the monitoring of car parks usage should continue throughout the summer until October 2021.

Members of the OSCPT&FG felt that some immediate benefit may be derived from designating some less used 'out of town' car parks for 'long stay' and encouraging all day workers to use them by improving signage and bringing the parking charges more in line with nearby on-road charges. Car parks for consideration were Wainwright Road – Bexhill, Gibbets Marsh – Rye and Lower Market – Battle.

Users of Manor Gardens car park in Bexhill could only pay for parking using RingGo. Despite introducing payment facilities into a nearby shop, evidence collected to date showed strong demand for the ability to pay by cash or card using a payment machine in this car park; the OSCPT&FG recommended a machine be installed. The cost of purchasing and installing a pay and display terminal in a car park was approximately £6,000. The OSCPT&FG also recommended a thorough review of the usage of Manor Garden car park be conducted and consideration be given to the appropriate level of charges.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted during the discussions:

- Members were pleased to note that the Camber Sands car parks showed an increase in usage when compared with the previous years;
- the recommended decrease in charges for those car parks to be designated as 'long stay' was to encourage users to park a little further out of town if visiting for longer, providing more

opportunity in the centre for those users wishing to park for a short time;

- Members were pleased to see the recommendations in respect of Manor Gardens car park, which had been highlighted as having particular problems for users; and
- those car parks to be designated as 'long stay' were severely underused. Members agreed that a decrease in charges would increase income by encouraging usage and improve the street scene in the surrounding areas.

Members of the Committee were supportive of all the OSCPT&FG's recommendations and thanked the Members for their work to date.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group continue beyond April 2021 to encompass the Civil Parking Enforcement review and that the revised Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 be agreed to reflect the group's wider remit;
- 2) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group continue its monitoring work under the revised Terms of Reference to both inform the East Sussex County Council led review of Civil Parking Enforcement and to recommend changes to off-street parking to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2022;
- 3) the monitoring work of the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement on off-street parking be continued until October 2021 to allow for further evidence gathering and data analysis over a 12 month period to provide a more accurate reflection on car park usage but will be dependent on the COVID-19 situation in the next six months;
- 4) the installation of improved signage in relevant car parks detailing the availability of Council car parking permits to encourage uptake, be noted;
- 5) a thorough review of the usage and appropriate level of charges for Manor Garden car park be conducted;

AND

Cabinet and full Council be requested to consider: That:

- 6) Wainwright Road – Bexhill Gibbets Marsh – Rye and Lower Market – Battle be designated as 'long stay' car parks. The daily parking charge for Wainwright Road and Gibbets Marsh be reduced from £5 to £2 per day and for Lower Market to £3 per day, for both summer and winter as soon as reasonably practicable to encourage usage of these less used 'out of town' car parks. The revenue derived from the three car parks in 2019 was £60,845. Potential loss of revenue if charges were reduced and take up did not increase was estimated to be £18,300;

- 7) the chargeable hours be brought into line across all car parks as soon as reasonably practicable, with charging starting at 8:00am and finishing at 7:00pm.
- 8) signage be installed to promote parking at Gibbets Marsh – Rye, Little Common – Bexhill, Lower Market – Battle and Wainwright Road – Bexhill car parks to improve visibility of the facility as ‘long stay’; and
- 9) a cash and card payment machine be installed at Manor Gardens car park.

(Councillor Courtel declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as he was a permit holder for one of the Bexhill car parks and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).

(Councillor Field declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as she was an elected Member of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).

OSC20/58 **KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2021/22**

Members received the report of the Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration, previously considered by Cabinet on 1 March 2021, detailing the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and their target levels of performance for the financial year 2021/22.

Eleven KPIs as detailed at Appendix A to the report were proposed for 2021/22 and would be reported within four themed areas, namely:

- Housing and Homelessness (five indicators)
- Economic Development and Poverty (three indicators)
- Waste Collection (one indicator)
- Additional Income (two indicators)

Other KPIs that were exceeding or significantly missing their target would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) by exception. Members of the Committee were invited to consider and suggest any additional KPIs for monitoring, bearing in mind the impact this would have on staff time to collect and provide commentary on.

The KPIs focused on key outcomes within the emerging Corporate Plan. A Corporate Programme Board would be established to monitor the Council’s service plans and a twice annual report would be presented to the OSC to provide an update on activity and target completion.

The Environment Strategy 2020-2030 set out the activities and actions that were to be undertaken in response to the Council’s Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019. Net carbon footprint for both the district and the Council would be KPIs in future years. By March 2022, it was anticipated that a baseline exercise and measurement model

would be established and completed for inclusion within the KPIs set for the 2022/23 financial year; this work would be carried out alongside ongoing work to progress the strategy.

Cabinet had approved the KPIs and targets and were satisfied that these provided an adequate review of the Council's key performance areas. Members of the OSC were requested to review the KPIs and recommend any actions / amendments to Cabinet as necessary.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted during the discussion:

- concerns were raised about the length of time taken for planning decisions to be made. The Planning Committee regularly reviewed performance, but Members requested wider scrutiny be considered by Cabinet;
- an extensive range of performance indicators were monitored by officers in addition to the KPIs, reviewed by the Chief Executive on a monthly basis;
- the KPIs were identified each year to reflect the Council's most important areas to be focused on;
- Climate Change performance indicators would continue to be discussed by the Climate Change Steering Group for inclusion in the KPI set for 2022/23;
- the target of £107,000 for Additional Income Generation, not currently monitored, related to Garden Waste Services fees; and
- the three indicators in the theme Economic Development and Poverty would provide Members with a broader narrative of the work of the Council.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) Cabinet be requested to consider wider scrutiny of performance in Planning.

OSC20/59

CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURES

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive on the Council's Call-In and Urgency Procedures. In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Rule 17 (b) of the Constitution, the operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency was monitored annually through a report submitted to full Council via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

The Call-In procedure was the mechanism by which the Council's OSC could challenge decisions made by the Executive that were not yet implemented. 12 Executive meetings had been held during the period of the report from 9 March 2020 up until 8 February 2021. No Executive decisions had been called-in during the period to which the report related; two decisions of Cabinet, within the approved budget and policy framework, had been deemed and resolved as an urgent decision.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the current arrangements for calling-in an executive decision remained satisfactory.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

OSC20/60 **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Members received the draft Annual Report to Council as submitted by the Chairman, Councillor Osborne. In accordance with Article 6, Paragraph 6.3 (d) of the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) was required to report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods, if appropriate.

The report covered the period from April 2020 through to the end of March 2021 and gave examples of the various subjects that the OSC had considered during this period, as well as the in-depth scrutiny reviews that had been conducted.

The Chairman reported that it had been a very busy and productive year and he had been pleased with the progress made in terms of improved scrutiny processes and comprehensive contributions from outside representatives.

Members requested that paragraph 6 be amended to include the word 'excluded' after 'With 9 Cabinet Members'.

The Chairman thanked Members for their input into the many debates that had taken place over the year. Members of the Committee thanked the Transformation team for their support in ensuring that meetings could take place remotely over the year and transmitted via YouTube, to enable continued public access to meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft Annual Report be approved, as amended, and recommended to Council.

OSC20/61 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme, and the following additions/amendments were made:

- a report on the properties accommodating the East Sussex County Council Nurseries in Bexhill be added to the 7 June meeting; and
- a report on the Post-COVID Recovery Plan be added to the 13 September meeting.

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

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8:12pm.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2021 – 2022		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM IN BOLD	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
07.06.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group • Performance Progress Report: Fourth Quarter 2020/21 • Annual Work Programme • Review of the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy • East Sussex County Council Nurseries in Bexhill 	
19.07.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring Quarter 4 2020/21 	
13.09.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: First Quarter 2021/22 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 1 2021/22 • Post-COVID Recovery Plan 	
18.10.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 	
22.11.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: Second Quarter 2021/22 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 2 2021/22 	
24.01.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2022/23 	
14.03.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Disorder Committee: to receive a report from the Community Safety Partnership • Performance Progress Report: Third Quarter 2021/22 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3 2021/22 	
25.04.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council 	
ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration incl Leisure Centre, Fountains, Skate Park and Accessibility of Green Spaces across the district • Corporate Plan review – referred back by Cabinet • Review of the Tourism Strategy • Review of the Economic Regeneration Strategy • Peer Review 		

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