

OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

1 December 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Northeast (Chairman), English (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Bicknell, B Blanchard-Cooper, Mrs Catterson, Mrs Cooper, Dendle, Dixon, Elkins, Gunner, Huntley, Miss Needs, Miss Seex and Tilbrook

Councillors Cooper, Coster, Mrs Gregory, Lury, Mrs Staniforth, Stanley, Dr Walsh and Mrs Yeates were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies: None.

328. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Elkins declared a personal interest in item 7 [Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/2022] as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Miss Seex declared a Pecuniary interest in item 7 [Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/2022] as she has applied for a reduction in her Council Tax bill.

Councillor Northeast declared a personal interest in item 7 [Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/2022] as a member of his family is in receipt of Council Tax benefit

329. MINUTES

The Chairman invited Councillor Huntly to make a statement prior to the minutes being approved by the Committee. His statement requested it be noted that he did not want to be identified with Minute 244 [Proposed correction of OSC minutes from 10 March].

The Committee Manager alerted the Committee to an inaccuracy to the resolution of Minute 244 [Proposed correction of OSC minutes from 10 March] where it was stated that the Committee made a recommendation to Full Council. This was incorrect as the Committee RESOLVED this item.

Then the minutes of the Overview Select Committee meeting held on 6 October were then approved by the Committee and they would be signed as soon as practicably possible.

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330. CORPORATE PLAN AND SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN

The Group Head of Policy introduced her report and advised the Committee that the performance of the Council was measured against high level Corporate Plan indicators and then against more detailed Service Delivery Plan indicators.

Performance reports are made quarterly to the Corporate Management Team and the Overview Select Committee and every 6 months and at the year end to Cabinet.

Corporate Plan Performance set out in Appendix A

- 11 Corporate Plan Indicators, 6 of which are measured at Q2.
- Of these 3 were achieving their target and 3 were not.
- Those not achieving their target were:
 - CP3 – Council Tax Collected
 - CP7 – Homelessness applications where homelessness is prevented
 - CP11 – Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
- Reasons for being behind target were outlined in Appendix A. Whilst no action was required at present on these, they were all being monitored closely by the Director of Services.

Service Delivery Plan (SDP) Performance set out in Appendix B

- 23 SDP indicators, 13 of which are measured at Q2
 - Of these
 - 2 not achieving target
 - 2 behind target
 - 2 achieving
 - 6 overachieving
- Those not achieving were:
 - SDP17 – Housing Benefit overpayments recovered
 - SDP 18 – Cost of emergency accommodation

There was no action to be taken for these indicators and they were being monitored by the Director of Services

Those behind Target were:

- SDP4 – Occupied retail units in Littlehampton
- SDP5 – Occupied retail units in Bognor Regis

Currently no action to be taken as these were only just behind target and not something the Council could directly control

In summary she advised that she had focused on the targets that were not being achieved at Q2, mainly because of reasons relating to Covid-19, but members could also see that many of the targets were being achieved or are indeed overachieving.

The Chairman raised his concern due to the lack of Council tax that had been collected, whilst these numbers were concerning, he hoped that the Council would have a sympathetic approach for those people who had been furloughed and or had lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Discussion on SDP 17 and 18 was had with Members making the following comments;

- SDP17 housing benefit overpayment recovered whilst the report provided a percentage figure it was requested for the actual figure to be provided to Members. It was advised by the Revenues & Benefits Manager that while he did not have the actual figures to hand, he could confirm that all Housing Benefit recovery had stopped during the pandemic. He advised that he would, circulate the actual figures to Members after the meeting.
- Concern in relation to business rates collected was raised and it was stated that this area had been underperforming prior to the pandemic and that previous suggestions of incentivising larger businesses with a business rates holiday should be considered by the Council. It was advised that the majority of small business in the district do have business rate exemption. The Chairman was in support of this suggestion and made a request that this suggestion was referred to the regeneration team for further consideration.
- It was commented that the pandemic had clearly had an impact on many of the performance results, but what was unknown was if the Council had forecast how much it believed it would be able to collect and recover. It was confirmed that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had frozen the route to collect monies until 2021.
- It was also suggested that with the number of current empty business units across the district had it been considered reaching out to business to offer use of these units with only small maintenance costs and a reduced or zero rent rate.
- It was felt that the Council needed a retail strategy that was twofold, comprising of incentives for business to move into the town centres as well as a considered approach to downsizing our town centres with a focus on making smaller more vibrant hubs.

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Further discussion was had on these service delivery plan results and Members felt a change in the measures may be needed. The Group Head of Planning and the Chief Executive advised and reminded Members that these measures were measures that Members had all agreed previously and they had been set for 4 years. He also confirmed that each of these measures would feed into the relevant Committee under the new structure that would be implemented in May 2021.

Following further discussion by Members on the following performance indicators;

- SDP 2 & 3, where it was asked how the Council was 'not' overachieving on these areas. The Chief Executive advised that these indicators had been picked up and referred to in the Shaun Hanerby Planning review, which was to be reviewed in the new year. There was also a request for these performance figures to be provided with a clear separation of the performance results minus any time extension added as this was felt to be the true figure.

The Committee then noted the report.

331. COVID 19 REPORT TO CABINET ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020 & VERBAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive introduced his report and provided Members with an update on the following;

- The District was now under tier 2 national restrictions as of 2 December 2020
- The Wave was re-opening at midnight tonight
- Most deprived areas are the most effected in terms of jobs lost
- Additional funding of £75k received to deal with the ongoing requirement so of the pandemic

The Chairman asked that as the District was now entering into tier 2 and there had been the guidance from central Government that should you go to the pub, you would be required to be seated, his concern was who was actually going to police this guidance. The Chief Executive explained that initially it would come down to the Environmental Health Team however, it was also the responsibility of members of the public to follow the guidelines put in place to ensure public safety.

It was stated that in light of the comments that had been made in reference to the economic recovery, what was the CEO's view on reconvening the Covid-19 Working Party again in the new year. The Chief Executive responded to Members that he thought this was a good idea as things do change daily and weekly in response to the pandemic. He also advised Members that the Council was running out of dates available to hold meetings in January, so this would need to be considered in line with

the capacity to do so and maybe it would be an idea to consider meeting in February instead.

Further questions were raised in relation to Members not having had updates on the recommendations put forward by the Covid-19 Working Party. The Chief Executive advised Members that it came back to capacity to get the work completed. The same officers that would work on these recommendations are also the ones who are completing the reactive work in relation to the pandemic. There had been no let up for Officers for 9 months and time needed to be given for Officers to be able to get to this work. He advised he expected an update in the new year.

In reference to the number of job losses across the District a Member of the Committee advised that the Coast to Capital Skills Strategy and Action Plan was a plan to identify the skills that would be required to help and enable people to attend courses so that they could re-train and re skill to obtain new jobs. The Chief Executive advised that the skills audit would provide some more local information to help with this. He further advised that the Council had been in discussion with Chichester College and the University of Chichester is bringing forward a nursing course to start next year (2021) in order to help assist with the need for people to re-skill. We were also working with Arun Business Partnership to see what local training could be made available for people.

The Chairman queried the usage of the community hub as he was unsure if it was being used at the moment. The Chief Executive advised that the community hubs had been used and had been widely promoted on Social Media and the Council's website, he also stated that West Sussex County Council were continuing to lead on that situation currently.

The Committee then noted the report and update.

332. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/2022

[Cllr Miss Seex – redeclared her interest and was moved to the waiting room, Cllr Bennett declared a personal interest due to family Member being in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.]

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Council Tax Support Task & Finish Working Party meeting held on 17 November 2020, and asked members to endorse the recommendation made by the Working Party by recommending to Cabinet that option 2 be approved.

During the discussion Members asked for clarity on the number of residents that would be impacted. It was advised by the Revenues and Benefits Manager that a few households may be adversely affected and that there was a discretionary hardship fund that these households may apply for, should they qualify for additional assistance. It was also confirmed that until changes were made an exact number was unknown at this time.

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The Overview Select Committee agreed to;

RECOMMEND to CABINET that

Option 2. To retain the current scheme for 2021/2022 but allow for an increase in the income banding.

333. FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS OF THE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2020

Councillor Bennett advised the Committee that an excellent presentation was provided to the Members at the meeting held on 11 November 2020. He advised that it was expected that vaccinations for flu would be difficult this year in managing and reacting to the pandemic.

334. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

Councillor Mrs Yeates, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, confirmed to the Committee that The Wave was re-opening from midnight tonight and that she and the Group Head of Community Wellbeing would be in attendance. She also advised that she had attended the hand over for the new digital shop in Littlehampton.

Councillor Gregory, Cabinet Member for Residential Services advised that her November updated had been circulated in advance of the meeting to all Members and that she was happy to take any questions.

Councillor Mrs Staniforth, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that her November update would be circulated after the meeting to all Members. She confirmed after a short period of absence that she was now back and getting caught up with all updates.

Councillor Lury, Cabinet Member for Planning reminded Members about the series of workshops coming up for Planning and urged Members to attend and watch the video that had also been circulated to all Members. He advised that Supplementary Planning Design Guide (SPD) would be presented to Full Council at the 13 January 2021 meeting for adoption.

Councillor Dr Walsh, Cabinet Member for Economy and Leader of the Council advised Members it had been confirmed today that, a Covid testing centre was being constructed at St Martins Car Park in Littlehampton. Attendance would be by appointment only.

Councillor Stanley, Cabinet Member for Technical Services advised that Environmental Health Officers were regularly meeting with the stakeholder board to ensure management of restrictions across the District continue well. Recruitment of two new Environmental Health Officers would help with balancing the reactive work in

relation the pandemic as well as a more proactive approach moving forward. He also advised that in the next few weeks he would be attending a meeting that focuses on coastal communities and suicide prevention, he would be able to update the Committee at the next meeting.

Following the updates from Cabinet members there were then a series of questions asked some of which have been briefly summarised below;

- Reasons to be provided on the logic for the Council having not purchased the upstairs of the Bognor Regis Arcade. A written answer was promised.
- Confirmation was sought as to what the Council could do in instances where members of the public were not following guidelines by wearing masks when shopping. It was advised there would be a number of people who fall into the exemption category and that also it was down to the retailers to challenge those who were not wearing masks. The Council and Members can help with education and advice on this matter only as shop are private premises.
- Confirmation of a private Members briefing regarding the London Road, Lorry Car Park was made.
- Request for further meetings of the Bognor Regeneration Sub-Committee was made as there were currently no more meetings planned for the rest of the municipal year.
- A request for Cabinet members to consider completing updates on their portfolios via social media was made.

335. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Chairman requested an informal briefing for the Committee before the next Committee meeting on 26 January 2021.

The Group Head of Policy alerted Members to the fact that a Residents Satisfaction Survey Working Party had been set up and there would need to be a formal meeting of the Working Party held with enough time for the minutes of the that meeting to feed into the next Committee meeting on 26 January 2021. She advised that timescale was very tight and would really depend on capacity and availability in order to be held.

Further requests from Members of the Committee were made for additional items to be considered for the Work Programme these included;

- A request that a letter be written to invite members of the Arundel Chord now that individual contacts had been made with Members of the Committee. The Chairman agreed to draft a letter to be sent.
- A request that Southern Water was invited to speak with the Committee in relation to their performance. Concerns were raised about the quality and safety of the water. An agreement that as time was tight on the existing Work

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Programme, that this would be a focus for the relevant Committee under the new structure.

The Group Head of Policy advised the Committee that the meeting due to be held on 23 March 2021 was planned to be a substantial meeting, due to update on Equalities and Diversity Policy, then the Greenspace Management Contract and Combined Cleansing Contract all in the same meeting. She proposed that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) item should therefore be moved to the next municipal year. It was also advised that this would work better for the CAB given their own response and workload during the pandemic. The Chairman advised he was in agreement and that moving it to the new municipal year was a good idea. Other Members felt that it was vitally important that the CAB item stayed on the Agenda for the March meeting, a vote was taken, and it was agreed to remain on the agenda for the March meeting. There were some further suggestions made by Members of the Committee to ensure the swift movement of agenda items during meetings, these were;

- The Health and Adult Social Care and the Police and Crime Panel updates to become reports that would be taken as read by the Committee
- A Potential split of the meeting into two parts, it was then advised by the Committee Manager that this would be an unlikely option due to the high number of meetings already confirmed for January 2021, the Calendar was full.

The Chairman was confident that with some more work between himself and the Officers that he could slim down the agendas for the remaining meetings of this municipal year.

The Chairman thanked the Committee and Officers for their support over the last year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The Committee noted the update.

(The meeting concluded at 8.14 pm)