

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the New Council Chamber on Thursday, 19 April 2018 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors B. A. Stead (Chairman), R. Absalom, R. H. Ashford, M. S. Blacker, M. A. Brunt, R. W. Coad, G. R. Curry, J. C. S. Essex, N. D. Harrison, S. Parnall, J. M. Stephenson and R. S. Turner

Also present: Councillors R. Mill, S. Walsh and C. Whinney.

54. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following revisions:

- That the minute of the discussion regarding potential conflicts of interest be revised to include specific reference to a suggestion that the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Finance Officer should not be directors of any companies.
- That the minute of the discussion regarding previously expressed Member concerns should have its wording revised to the following: 'A number of Members stated that they had previously expressed concerns regarding the Council's involvement with and management of Pathway for Care and were dissatisfied with the outcome obtained.'
- That the minute of the discussion regarding the motions circulated to the Committee should be revised to clarify that one of the suggestions was that a Member task force be created to consider lessons learned from the Council's experiences with Pathway for Care.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Committee Members: Mr R. Mantle, Mr D. Powell, and Mrs D. Ross-Tomlin (substituted by Cllr Mr D. Allcard)

Others: None

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

57. PORTFOLIO HOLDER BRIEFING

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Mrs R. Mill, Executive Member for Leisure and Wellbeing, regarding the Council's work and associated matters around Leisure, Wellbeing and Health. This included an overview of the Council's current key activity areas and future plans, including information regarding the following areas:

- The Wellbeing Prescription Service and other prevention work.
- Ageing Well support, including taxi vouchers and the Get Active 50+ scheme.
- Leisure centres in the borough.
- Activities and sports programmes for children and young people.
- The Harlequin Theatre and Cinema, including the Star for the Night event and accessibility provision.
- The Council's work with the voluntary sector.
- Wellbeing and skills development support for Council employees.
- Key local challenges, the way forward and the 5 Year Plan.

The Committee was advised that the Council would particularly be looking to act in a leadership and coordination role to help optimise and enhance services provided by the wide range of local organisations, including the NHS, voluntary groups and other agencies. The importance of preventative action and promoting positive social determinants of health was noted to be an important element of supporting residents and ensuring that services were able to meet future demand.

The Committee considered and discussed the report. There were a number of questions and comments on the report, relating to the following topics:

- **The Wellbeing Prescription Service.** It was identified that the Wellbeing Prescription Service currently only covered the sections of the borough within the area of operations of the East Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), due to the requirement for supporting funding from the relevant CCG. It was noted that the northern areas of the borough within the area of operations for the Surrey Downs CCG were not currently covered as the Surrey Downs CCG was not currently providing funding for the service. The Committee was advised that the Council was continuing to work to expand the service to the entirety of the borough, and was seeking to encourage Surrey Downs CCG to support the service. Members supported the principle that the Council should continue to aim to provide equivalent support across all areas of the borough.
- **Apprentices.** It was confirmed that apprentices employed by the Council were paid in line with the relevant national minimum wage requirements.
- **Transport options in the borough.** It was identified that transport provision in the borough continued to be an important consideration, and that a range of options were under consideration at a borough and county level. There was an indication of Member support for cycling provision in the borough. It was identified that the current taxi voucher scheme generated more positive feedback from residents than the previous bus-based support, and was also more cost-effective.
- **Dementia support.** The establishment of a Dementia working group was supported as a positive step. It was confirmed that the dance activities delivered at the Anchor care homes in Banstead were also open to the public.

- **Leisure Centres.** A query was raised regarding visitor statistics for the Leisure Centres in the borough and their rate of increases to their membership. It was identified that representatives of the centres would be attending a forthcoming meeting of the Committee and would be able to provide detailed responses to questions regarding user statistics at that time.
- **The Voluntary Sector and funding of voluntary groups.** Members remarked that voluntary sector organisations provided a range of valuable services across the borough. A number of concerns were raised regarding the funding available for voluntary organisations, including the withdrawal of funding for some groups by Surrey Downs CCG.

It was suggested that the Council consider how it provides funding to voluntary groups to ensure that it generates the best value for money, and that groups remain incentivised to seek parallel sources of funding rather than becoming dependent solely on Council support. The Committee was advised that this suggestion was in-line with the Council's current practices. The Committee was advised that the Council sought to identify and support effective voluntary organisations, whilst avoiding duplication of services and reminding providers that they should also seek other sources of funding. It was identified that where the Council did identify duplication of service provision, it would seek to support consolidation of these services and cooperation between relevant groups.

It was noted that the continued financial pressures facing the Council and other local authority organisations meant that future capacity to provide funding was uncertain, and that providing money now to help voluntary organisations establish their operations and secure other funding was potentially particularly beneficial.

It was suggested that feedback metrics regarding voluntary sector activities might be of interest to Members. It was noted that obtaining relevant metrics was challenging due to the diverse nature of work and circumstances, but the Council's work with Stripey Stork was suggested as a recent successful area of activity.

The Committee thanked the Executive Member and supporting officers for the presentation.

RESOLVED that the portfolio holder briefing from Cllr Mrs R. Mill, Executive Member for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing, be noted.

58. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/19

The Committee considered a report on the Council's Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19. The Chairman reminded Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was the audit committee for the Council.

The Committee considered and discussed the report, the Internal Audit Strategy and the Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19. There were a number of questions and comments on the report, relating to the following topics:

- **Strategic Risk SR1 – Financial sustainability and commercial service development.** It was confirmed that the review of this risk initially scheduled for 2017/18 had been deferred to 2018/19.

- **Strategic Risk SR7 – Cyber security.** It was queried if an additional audit of cyber security processes would be advisable, given recent media reports of related concerns. The Committee was advised that the Council maintained an ongoing cyber security programme, but that an additional audit of these processes was not judged to be required at this time due to the assurance provided by the thorough review in 2016/17. It was noted that an element of the Council's IT arrangements was subject to review on a rotating annual basis.
- **Strategic Risk SR8 – The UK's exit from the European Union.** Members were advised that no audit was proposed in relation to this risk as the uncertain impact of the event and lack of directly associated advance actions meant that there were no clear processes to audit. It was noted that the uncertainty in this area was reflected in the Council's planning, where possible.
- **Strategic Risk SR10 – Recycling credits.** Members were advised that no audit was proposed in relation to this risk as negotiations regarding recycling credits were currently ongoing and the Council was aware of the risk.
- **Strategic Risk SR11 – Data protection.** A query was raised regarding the relevance of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to the Council and the proportionality of the Council's response to the regulation. It was confirmed that the regulations were relevant to Council, due to both their legislative requirements and the Council's duty to protect its residents and vulnerable individuals within the borough, whose data was protected by the regulations. The Committee was advised that the Council's response to the regulations was considered to be proportionate.
- **Actions in the event of issues being identified by internal audits.** The Committee was advised that in the event of issues being identified by an internal audit a remediation plan would be implemented. It was noted that completed internal audit reports were available on the e-Members room, and that any areas identified to have significant concerns would be brought to the attention of the Committee.
- **The audit service providers.** It was confirmed that the current audit service providers were an established provider of audit services with sufficient expertise to address the wide range of matters handled by the Council.
- **Fees for the internal audit service, and associated deed of variation.** It was identified that a contractual deed of variation has been signed due to an extension of the contracted period. It was noted that the Council's internal audit service was procured via a consortium, which would be undertaking a procurement process in the near future.
- **Financial processes and fraud avoidance.** The Committee was advised that there was a regular audit of the Council's financial processes, which included consideration of fraud avoidance. It was noted that this was also considered as part of the Council's annual external audit process.
- **Building control services.** It was confirmed that an internal audit of the southern building control partnership had been undertaken in 2017/18 and that the Council was awaiting the report, following its agreement by the auditors and Tandridge District Council (as the lead authority in the partnership).
- **Additional internal audit areas.** There were a number of suggested areas for additional internal audits. These included: Leisure centre contract arrangements, new debt recovery processes, council commercial activity processes, green spaces, fleet maintenance. It was identified that the new debt recovery processes were an extension of existing practices, and were therefore covered under the existing audit programme.

It was noted that any additional items in the audit plan would likely require the new items to replace existing items, due to the limits of the capacity of the contracted audit service. The Committee supported a proposal to remove the dog warden back office functions and planning & S106/CIL compliance & income audits from the plan.

The Committee was supportive of a future internal audit regarding the leisure centre contract arrangements. The Committee was supportive of an internal audit regarding the Council's commercial activity processes and it was agreed that this would be added to the internal audit plan for the forthcoming 2018/19 municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Plan 2018/19 be endorsed, with the modifications supported by the Committee.

59. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Committee considered the draft Annual Report of the Committee's work for the municipal year 2017/18.

It noted that whilst there remained provision for joint scrutiny work in Surrey, there had been none undertaken as no agreement had been reached on a single county wide topic.

RECOMMENDED that the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Report 2017/18 be noted.**

60. EXECUTIVE

It was reported that there were no items arising from the Executive that might be subject to the 'call-in' procedure in accordance with the provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

61. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business.

The Meeting closed at 9.36 pm