

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 - Town Hall, Reigate on Thursday, 20 February 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors N. D. Harrison (Chair), S. T. Walsh (Vice-Chair), R. Absalom, M. S. Blacker, G. Buttironi, J. C. S. Essex, R. J. Feeney, J. Hudson, F. Kelly, J. P. King, R. Michalowski, J. E. Philpott, R. S. Turner and S. McKenna (Substitute)

Also present: Councillors R. Biggs, N. Bramhall, E. Humphreys, V. Lewanski and T. Schofield

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Committee Members: Councillor K. Sachdeva.

Councillor S. Sinden was substituted for by Councillor S. McKenna.

37. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members elected a Vice-Chair for this Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2019/20. Councillor S. Walsh was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair, proposed by Councillor G. Buttironi and seconded by Councillor M. Blacker. Councillor S. Walsh was duly elected Vice-Chair.

38. MINUTES

RESOLVED – the Minutes of the previous meeting on 11 February 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J. Essex declared a non-pecuniary interest as a director of Furnistore.

There were no other declarations of interest.

40. PROGRESS UPDATE ON 2019/2020 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members considered a progress update on the Council's Statement of Accounts 2019/20 to date following a request from Committee Members in October 2019. Councillor T. Schofield, Portfolio Holder for Finance, gave an overview of preparations for publishing the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts. The report to the Committee included an overview of progress on lessons learnt from the previous financial year and actions planned for the 2019/20 closedown. This included

specialist accounting support to develop the valuation information in the property assets register and working with the Council's external auditors (Deloitte LLP) to improve the quality of the annual Statement of Accounts and supporting information, including establishing a Grants Register.

Members commented on the ongoing valuation of property assets work that included processes to reflect best practice and the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Interim Head of Finance and Assets confirmed that the assets register was being reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with the Code. Further detail would be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED – that the progress update on Statement of Accounts 2019/20 and the observations of the Committee be noted.

41. **PORTFOLIO HOLDER BRIEFING - PLACE PORTFOLIOS**

Committee Members received a briefing and presentations from three Executive Members responsible for Place Portfolio areas: Councillor R. Biggs, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, Councillor E. Humphreys, Portfolio Holder for Place and Economic Prosperity, and Councillor N. Bramhall, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services.

The Chair, Councillor N. Harrison, also introduced the Director of Place Services, Luci Mould, and the Head of Planning, Head of Economic Prosperity and Head of Neighbourhood Operations.

Councillor R. Biggs, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, gave an overview of achievements during the 2019/20 on planning policy which included the adoption of the Development Management Plan (DMP) on 26 September 2019, following public examination in 2018. Councillor Biggs thanked officers for their work to complete the DMP. The Portfolio Holder gave Members updates on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the Core Strategy Review and updated Members on Transport and work with Surrey County Council, Highways England, and Network Rail to improve infrastructure in the Borough. He also gave an update on the work of the Southern Building Control Partnership with Tandridge and Mole Valley District Councils and added that the Partnership's financial performance had improved year on year.

Members asked questions and discussed the following topics:

- **Permitted development** – Members asked about permitted development in relation to office conversions to residential properties and the planning policy position going forward. It was noted that the Council did not agree or control this current central government policy, but they were working hard to influence local MPs to press for a change in national policy.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** – Members discussed the plan for preparing SPDs to provide detailed guidance to help implement DMP policies and asked about priorities. The Head of Planning updated Members on the recent public consultation on four SPDs which were due to be adopted by Executive and Council in April. The SPDs were: Affordable Housing, Barn and Farm Conversions, Historic Parks and Gardens and Reigate Shopfront SPDs. The next step was preparing an SPD for Horley

Business Park. A Member group (DMAG) would be set up later in the year to look at other potential SPDs. Chair, Cllr N. Harrison, noted that a meeting of the reconvened Local Development Framework Scrutiny Review Panel, a task group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, had taken place to review the public consultation on the SPDs and was due to be discussed at this Committee at its meeting on 16 April 2020.

- **Building control** – Members asked about updated fire safety building controls that were emerging following lessons learned from the Grenfell fire disaster in London and the ongoing Public Inquiry, inspections and public scrutiny. It was noted that there would be a number of recommendations and legislative changes for building inspectors that would have an impact on the work of Southern Building Control Partnership going forward. Members thanked Southern Building Control Partnership inspectors for their work including in the north of the Borough where inspectors had worked at the weekend to prevent potential damage and danger to lives. Members asked for contact details for replying to specific building control questions.
- **Transport infrastructure** – Members asked for an update on Surrey County Council and Highways work in the north of the Borough. It was confirmed that the long-term five to ten-year infrastructure plan covered the whole of Reigate & Banstead Borough.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – It was noted that over £2m had been secured with a further £4m due. Over £700,000 had been spent on infrastructure projects agreed by the Executive out of the 80% Strategic CIL allocation, including two secondary schools: St Bede's School expansion (£250,000) and Oakwood School expansion (£250,000). Members asked if the building work had been completed on these two schools which was project managed by Surrey County Council. Members expressed concerns that Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's CIL funding was supporting Surrey County Council projects and asked how this compared with other local authorities. It was noted that these strategic local infrastructure projects benefited the Borough's residents as a whole, were still in early stages of completion and CIL funding arrangements would be reviewed next year to make sure the public money had been spent wisely. An annual report on the use of CIL funding was a statutory requirement. Chair, Cllr N. Harrison, said that the Committee would scrutinise future strategic and local CIL funding and would ask to bring these issues to the Committee in due course.

Members next heard a presentation from Councillor E. Humphreys, Portfolio Holder for Place and Economic Prosperity. Councillor Humphreys gave an update on his following portfolio areas: Horley Business Park, Gatwick/Heathrow Airports, local business support, Marketfield Way, Horley Master Plan and Preston regeneration.

Members discussed the following topics:

- **Horley Business Park** – this was in the early stages of development and engagement with partners, including Gatwick Airport was needed to understand access issues/expansion proposals. The site had been allocated for employment purposes in the DMP in September 2019. It was noted that transport infrastructure included a proposed service road infrastructure from the M23.
- **Heathrow and Gatwick Airports** – both Heathrow and Gatwick airports were progressing expansion plans and flight path changes. Key meetings

had been held and officers were responding to consultations. Further consultations were anticipated in the year ahead on Gatwick Airport's plans and more detail from them was required on their high impact proposals which included use of their emergency runway. It was noted that the planning authorities were Crawley and West Sussex councils whose residents would have the biggest input on the proposals. Officers were working in co-ordination with other local authorities. It was noted that Gatwick was important to the area as an employer and transport hub but also generated the largest number of complaints about aircraft noise and concern about carbon emissions. Members sought reassurance that Gatwick Airport's owners were consulting fully with local authorities on their expansion plans, particularly on the increase in the number of passengers and flights, increased carbon emissions and the impact on climate change. Councillor E. Humphreys noted Members' comments about future consultation on proposed aircraft expansion and said aircraft were becoming more carbon neutral in the years ahead. It was noted that the Council had less input to the full consultation on Heathrow Airport as it was not a neighbouring local authority although it could respond on proposed flight paths.

Chair, Councillor N. Harrison, noted that as there were further Member questions on major public consultations such as Gatwick Airport, Members and Officers should look at how best to work together on public consultation responses. Officers would take this forward with Portfolio Holders.

- **Environmental sustainability** – it was noted that an environmental sustainability workshop with Members was due to take place in early March which was a forum for Members to share ideas and comment on current issues and consultations.
- **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Local Industrial Strategy** – the Leader of Council, Councillor M. Brunt, had joined the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board and there was officer representation on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Programme Board. The Council was actively engaged with Coast to Capital (C2C). LIS proposals were drafted and under discussion.
- **Supporting local businesses** – it was noted that 37 business support grants worth £36,978 had been awarded since April 2019 to help local businesses. Feedback was positive and many grant recipients had grown their businesses and taken on new staff. Members asked for a written response giving more detail on how the grants had been used by local businesses.
- **Reigate & Banstead Business Awards** – it was noted that the awards in June 2019 had 57 nominations. Members were encouraged to promote the awards to their local businesses for this year's awards as it was a great way to recognise and promote the work of local companies. Members highlighted work with local schools and colleges as well as support for taking on apprentices. Members discussed how to encourage new businesses and local shops in town centres and how the Council could support them to start, develop and grow businesses and improve long term survival rates and company growth. It was noted that Canon was due to close its offices in Reigate, but Fidelity was growing in the north of the Borough.
- **Development projects** – Place Delivery Services had taken on responsibility for the Council's development projects. A new development

manager had been appointed who had taken a comprehensive review of the Council's three main housing projects: Cromwell Road, Pitwood Park and Lee Street.

- **Marketfield Way in Redhill** – it was noted that significant progress had been made on this project. The construction company Vinci had started enabling and demolition works in January. It was confirmed that hoardings would go up round the site shortly. The end date was projected to be mid 2022. New project management and quantity surveyors had been appointed. Priorities for 2020/21 included finalising and entering into an agreement for lease with the cinema operator and preparing a lettings strategy for the retail space and updating marketing material. It was noted that risks were captured on a risk register and discussed monthly with the Portfolio Holder (sooner if needed). Councillor E. Humphreys thanked Councillor S. Walsh for his input into these projects and thanked officers for their continuing work.
- **Horley Master Plan** – this progressed well in 2019/20 with a comprehensive upgrade of the pedestrian precinct in the town centre and proposed plans for a new community hall. Members noted that there had been problems with ground repair and drainage works in Horley by UK Power Networks which had resulted in complaints from retailers.
- **Preston Regeneration** – work included a new youth shelter and a closed-circuit television camera linked to Surrey Police. A public consultation exercise had been carried out on plans to undertake highway works on Chetwode Road and Homefield Gardens.
- **Projects and performance milestones** – Members discussed the process for regular Committee updates on development projects which included quarterly updates to the Committee on performance. It was noted that some information was commercially confidential, but Members could be informed via written responses.

Members had a presentation from Councillor N. Bramhall, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Operations. Cllr Bramhall gave an update on her portfolio areas: Refuse, Recycling and Cleansing, Regulatory Services, Fleet Management and Greenspaces. Highlights included collecting recycling and waste from 64,000 households (including 7100 tonnes of paper, 6400 tonnes of mixed recycling and 4500 tonnes of food). The teams provided assisted collections for 600 elderly or disabled residents. The Council was expecting delivery of the first phase of the Fleet Replacement programme in April 2020 with seven new 26 tonne dustcarts arriving. The new vehicles have electric bin lifters reducing fuel consumption by 12 per cent. 'Big Belly Bins' had been installed at Earlswood lakes which increase capacity for taking rubbish. The recycling roll-out to flats continued to be well-received by residents to 1176 flats with a further 1124 to be delivered at the end of this year.

Regulatory Services – Joint Enforcement Team (JET) had tackled reports of anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles with police and other agencies. The team had carried out enforcement activity caused by inconsiderate parking near schools and worked with Sustrans to encourage alternative methods of transport. Environmental health had enforced standards of food hygiene in food businesses, inspecting around 300 premises a year. Licensing had protected animal welfare by implementing animal welfare regulations and pet shop and animal breeding licences. Greenspaces were working on the planned enhancement of countryside sites such as Tanyard Meadows and wildflower planting on verges.

Members discussed and raised questions on the following topics:

- **Greenspaces** – Members thanked the Greenspaces team for their excellent work on maintaining parks and green spaces for residents and visitors. Planned enhancement of countryside sites was being adopted as part of the Riverside Green Chain development was new for 2020. Members asked about Reigate Heath and smaller green spaces in the south of the Borough with pressure on increasing numbers of residents and planned developments. The work on Tanyard Meadows in Horley was discussed as well as delivery of Merstham Recreation Ground regeneration scheme and tree planting in Coles Mead.
- **Reigate Heath** – it was noted that the area was popular with walking groups and some private companies were charging for guided walks (such as for Nordic walkers) on Reigate Heath. Members suggested looking into how the Council could benefit from profit making groups by charging them fees.
- **Wildflower verge sites** – the Borough was working in partnership with Surrey County Council on the planting and upkeep of wildflower verges. They had also been advised by Banstead Common Conservators. The first wildflower sites would be along the A217. Members asked for more information on the planned sites which would be supplied in a written answer to the Committee.
- **Refuse, recycling and cleansing** – the successful recycling roll-out to flats was continuing well. Following the end of phase 2, the Council would be working with partners, landlords and property owners to deliver the service to properties where it was more difficult to access due to narrow entrances to collect the waste. A full breakdown would be given after the end of phase 2. Blue and green waste bags were supplied for residents who found it difficult to take boxes down flights of stairs where there was no lift.
- **Minicabs** – JET was taking action to prevent minicabs parking in the centre of Redhill and in Sainsbury's access road and blocking pedestrian crossings. It was noted that there were problems with delivery drivers who were parking by MacDonald's to pick up food for online orders such as UberEATS.
- **Environmental sustainability strategy** – a presentation to Members was due on 5 March 2020 and a Member task group feeding into the strategy would stay in place. Once the strategy was completed, the Borough would work with Surrey County Council as the work was aligned to the countywide strategy.
- **Borough boundary road signs** – Members referred to the 'Welcome to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council' Borough Boundary road sign on the northern carriageway A217 which needed repairs. Members asked if the Strategic Head of Neighbourhood Services could follow-up this request.

Chair, Councillor N. Harrison, thanked all Executive Portfolio Holders for their presentations and thanked officers attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Committee's observations regarding the Place Portfolio Holder briefings and business areas be noted.

42. DRAFT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - 2020/21

Members received a report on the Council's draft Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21 from Councillor V. Lewanski, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Direction and Governance. The updated draft KPIs had been reviewed by a cross-party Member working group to ensure that the Council's performance measures remained robust and fit for purpose for 2020/21. An updated reporting template was ensuring that the indicators included enhanced narrative about each indicator. The KPIs were reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

Members welcomed the reviewed and updated KPIs and made observations which included: capturing performance on commercial revenues (KPI 10 – Movement in investment income as a % of the Council's budget), homelessness prevention (KPI 3 – the % of positive homelessness prevention and relief outcomes), household waste (KPI 8 – the % of household waste that is recycled and composted). It was noted that additional performance on revenue, for example, the Harlequin theatre was captured in budget monitoring reports to the Committee.

Members thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for their work on the revised draft KPIs which were due to come to Executive on 26 March 2020 for adoption by 1 April 2020.

RESOLVED – that the draft Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2020/21 and the observations of the Committee be noted.

43. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Members considered the proposed work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. The programme of activity set out the work to be considered by the Committee from May 2020. It was noted that emerging strategies that could be scrutinised included the Council's environmental strategy and the Borough's response to Gatwick Airport's consultation on the increased use of its existing emergency runway.

RESOLVED – that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Proposed Work Programme 2020/21 be approved.

44. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME - FEBRUARY 2020

Members considered the Committee's Future Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2019/20. Members discussed a request that had been made to the Committee to consider the environmental sustainability strategy item for consideration at its 16 April meeting rather than its 19 March 2020 meeting. Members asked for sight of the summary report of the review of procurement and contract management processes which had been noted on the Committee's action tracker. Members asked if future scheduling of meetings could try and avoid half term weeks which would help those Councillors with school-age families.

Chair, Councillor N. Harrison, informed Members that a set of monthly theme dashboards on project reporting were now made available to all Councillors via the ModGov intranet library. These contained useful background information on the

Council's programme and project reporting. A direct link to the folder would be sent to Members.

RESOLVED – that the Future Work Programme 2019/20 for the remainder of the Municipal Year be noted.

45. 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 Committee Procedure Rules.

46. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

The Meeting closed at 9.55 pm