

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TO THE EXECUTIVE

19 SEPTEMBER 2019

Neither the Vice-Chairman nor I are able to be at the meeting tonight, but we want to bring some key points from the last O&S meeting to your attention.

Capital Investment Strategy 2019/20

Work plan – The Strategy has started to develop the numbers required to help meet the Council's financial objectives, and will be developed further as priorities in the new Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy are finalised. The Strategy sets out a logical process as the Council looks at Budget gaps, sets out its final plans and proposed commercial investments.

Commercial Ventures Executive Sub-Committee (CVESC) – There is on-going work to evaluate the management reporting, risk profile and capital investment criteria, but nothing has formally come to the CVESC so far. O&S has received assurances that a report will be formally put forward and that O&S would be consulted.

Capital Projects - Members asked about progress on investments in property and capital scheme developments over the last five years. The Strategy reported that progress has been made over recent months with major schemes including Marketfield Way, Cromwell Road, Lee Street and Pitwood Park. Members asked for information on the current timescales for these projects.

Property team – Members noted that there are gaps in permanent staff in the property team, which is not at full strength and needs more people with the appropriate skills. There is otherwise a risk to the implementation of the major schemes. Officers reported that an external consultant's review of staffing is to be considered. Members were surprised that the absence of a full property team was not regarded as a "red risk" at this time (Appendix 1, page 38 of the report). Officers commented that the Council had good interim staff on the team.

Purchase of shares/Provision of loans – The report referred to the option of making loans to and buying shares in service providers and local businesses to promote economic growth. Members had concerns about this statement. The Council makes small grants to local businesses but investing in shares in local businesses, while worthy, was concerning. The Committee felt the Council should be very cautious with such proposals.

Next Steps - Members noted that capital growth requirements will be considered as part of the service and financial planning process, and would be subject to review by O&S.

Quarterly Performance Report (Q1 2019/20)

KPI 2 Residential Completions – Given the importance of the new homes target in the Core Strategy, Members were surprised that permissions commenced but not yet completed were not tracked more closely, at least on an overall basis.

KPI 2 Household Waste – Members acknowledged that the percentage recycled and composted had increased, but noted performance has fallen short of the new “stretch” target. They asked for information to understand the steps that can be taken to improve performance.

Concern was expressed about the current level of the garden waste subscription charge which it was believed was now above most other Surrey boroughs and districts.

Review of KPIs – Members were enthusiastic in working with the portfolio holder in establishing a new set of key performance indicators.

Cllr N D Harrison

Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The input from the Committee was welcomed by Council Members on 26 September 2019 and it was noted that these observations had been fully captured in the minutes from the meeting:

<https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/documents/b4651/Addendum%20-%20Recommendations%2026th-Sep-2019%2019.30%20Council.pdf?T=9>