

COUNCIL MEETING – 20TH APRIL 2023

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's procedures for monitoring the overview and scrutiny process, this report reviews the work that has been undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2022/23. The Committee's focus has been to keep a watching brief on the Council's activities and local facilities, along with service performance and providing comments and ideas. The aim has been to shape the Council's future policy and services. The Report covers the issues discussed, the processes followed, and the outcomes achieved during the year.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PLAN

- 2.1 The Committee was established as part of the review of the decision making structure which took effect from May, 2018. The Committee's breadth of activity includes all Council services and services provided by other organisations which impact on the Borough and its inhabitants.
- 2.2 The progress meeting (consisting of Cllrs. Gaynor Austin, Diane Bedford, Keith Dibble, Stuart Trussler and, myself) has been used for discussion and consideration of processes and priorities. It also monitors the work plan and undertakes agenda planning.

3. COMMITTEE ISSUES

- 3.1 Over the year, the Committee has endeavoured to ensure that it has kept the Council's activities under review. However, some external scrutiny has been undertaken, in particular, around the economic and environmental impacts of the Farnborough Airport and this work will continue into 2023/24. It has also been important to ensure that there is no duplication of work with the Policy and Project Advisory Board and this issue will continue to be monitored during the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
- 3.2 The main areas of focus in 2022/23 were:

Registered Providers – Through the Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Keith Dibble, Sophie Porter, Nem Thapa, Stuart Trussler and myself) the Committee has continued the review of registered during the 2022/23 Municipal Year. The scrutiny of performance and activities has been

limited to three registered providers (VIVID, Southern Housing Group and Grainger Trust) for 2022/23. The 2022/23 annual report will be considered by the Committee at its first meeting of the Municipal Year (15th June, 2023) at which the recommendations will be considered and endorsement requested to continue with the review programme in 2023/24.

Council Tax Support Scheme – A Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Christine Guinness, Lee Jeffers, Mike Roberts, Stuart Trussler and myself) has carried out a review of the Council Tax Support Scheme. At the meeting of the Committee in December 2022, a presentation was provided on the Cost of Living crisis and the funding streams available and how the information has been made available to residents. A report was submitted to the Cabinet and the Council in January 2022 and February, 2023 respectively, where the recommendations of the Group were agreed.

Cabinet Champions – The Committee received a presentation from the three Cabinet Champions at its meetings in June/July, 2022 where each Champion set out the priorities for 2022/2. At the March 2023 meeting the Champions provided reports on their work and activities during the year, the Committee noted the achievements and activities of each Champion and requested more regular feedback during 2023/24.

Corporate Customer Services Indicators – At the meeting in July 2022, the Committee were provided a presentation on customer contact data and a number of trials with different departments. A watching brief on the work of the Customer Services Unit will be maintained and it is expected that an update will be provided in the new Municipal Year.

Community Safety and Policing – at the meeting in September 2022, the Committee heard from Police representatives and the Safer North Hampshire team on current issues across the Borough. The reduction of Youth Services was identified as a contributing factor in some of the crime data and contact with Hampshire County Council had been made to address this matter, which was ongoing. A watching brief on community safety and policing matters will be maintained during 2023/24.

Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan – At its meeting in December 2022, the Committee considered the work of the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan. Following a refresh, that took place during Summer 2022, current work and past achievements were outlined and noted. The Committee will keep a watching brief on the work of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Farnborough Airport – In February 2023, the Committee met with representatives for the Farnborough Airport to discuss its economical and environmental impacts on the Borough following the publication of The Economic Impact of Farnborough Airport – Report. At the meeting it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group will be established in the new Municipal Year to take this work forward.

Management of Damp and Mould in the Local Housing Sector – In March 2023, a report was received on the current position with dealing with issues of damp and mould in social and private rented properties. It was proposed that, repairs and living conditions should be added to the questions used by the Registered Providers Group as part of the scrutiny process and that a Task and Finish Group could be considered for 2023/24, to look at private sector landlords in more detail.

- 3.4 Other items considered during the year were performance monitoring, Property Services and Parks and Playgrounds.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has worked well during the year and carried out a range of activities, which have a significant impact on the Borough and the Council. The work of the Committee will be reviewed at the start of the 2023/24 Municipal Year to ensure that the Work Plan is realistic, and the focus is on issues where it can make a difference.
- 4.2 Finally, and importantly, I feel that the Committee has worked effectively together during the year, in particular cross-party co-operation and the depth of scrutiny achieved. All Members have contributed at meetings, and I would like to express my thanks for their support and especially the two Vice-Chairman. In addition, I am also grateful for the support given by the officers to the Committee and myself as Chairman.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Council is asked to note and endorse the Committee's work.

CLLR. M. SMITH
CHAIRMAN - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE