

**COUNCIL MEETING – 22ND APRIL 2021**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

**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 2020/21. The Committee's focus has been to keep a watching brief on the performance of council activities, local facilities and providing comments and ideas, which would help 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. One of the key roles is to monitor the Council's performance management data - this is used to identify specific areas for scrutiny and detailed assessment.
- 2.2 The progress meeting (consisting of Cllrs. Gaynor Austin, Diane Bedford, Veronica Graham-Green, Christine Guinness, 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 The Committee's activities have been affected by the pandemic with work carried out remotely and opportunities for detailed work more limited. Over the year, the Committee endeavoured to ensure that it has kept all of the Council's activities under review. It had been hoped to provide training for the Committee on scrutiny but this has not been possible remotely and is being scheduled for the start of the 2021/2 Municipal Year. 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 looked at during the 2021/22 Municipal Year at quarterly joint chairs meeting.
- 3.2 The main areas of focus in 2020/21 were:

**Performance Monitoring** – The Committee has reviewed the Council's performance monitoring data at several of its meetings throughout the 2020/21 Municipal Year. Recently the Committee has been looking at how performance data is collected and reported on against the Council Business Plan projects and wider performance reporting. The Committee has endorsed the new approach and will continue to review performance monitoring during 2021/22.

**Registered Providers** – The Committee received the Review of Registered Providers annual report for 2019/20 and set up a Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Terry Bridgeman, Sue Carter, Rod Cooper, Keith Dibble and myself) to carry out the reviews during 2020/21. For the 2020/21 Municipal Year it was agreed that the scrutiny of performance and activities should be limited to three registered providers per year and that the areas for questions should focus on strategic issues including, climate change, deprivation and the impacts of C19. The 2020/21 annual report will be considered by the Committee at a future meeting with recommendations to discuss with the Portfolio Holder.

**Commercial Property Investment** – The Committee received a presentation on the Council's Commercial Property Investment Portfolio at its meeting in September, 2020. The presentation covered the working arrangements, the Property Investment Strategy and the Q2 monitoring of the current portfolio.

**Council Tax Support Scheme** – A Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Alex Crawford, Veronica Graham-Green, Mara Makunura, Mike Roberts and myself) has carried out a review of the Council Tax Support Scheme. A report was submitted to the Cabinet and the Council in December, 2020 and February, 2021 respectively, where it was agreed that the existing level of support should be retained for 2020/21.

**Educational improvement** – A Task and Finish Group was set up to meet at the start of the 2020/21 Municipal Year (consisting of Cllrs. Gaynor Austin, Sue Carter, Mara Makunura, Nadia Martin and Steve Masterson and myself). The Group met in February, 2021, with the County Council Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills (Cllr Roz Chadd). An update on education in Hampshire and how the current arrangements were working following the impacts of COVID-19 was provided. A further meeting of the Group would be held in summer 2021.

**Town Centre Markets and Car Boots** – The Committee held a workshop in August, 2020 at which an ideas exercise was carried out on how to achieve better sustainability for markets and car boots going forward. A number of questions were discussed and it was agreed that the provision of markets and car boots in the town centres should continue. A number of ideas to make improvements to the offer and arrangements were put forward to the Portfolio Holder who was being consulted on the future provision of car boots and markets in the town centres. The comments of the Committee will be taken into account a part of these discussions.

**Aldershot Town Football Club** – During the 2020/21 Municipal Year the Committee received representations from the Aldershot Town Football Club Supporters Trust on issues relating to the Football Club, including the conclusion of the new lease, the engagement approach between the Club and its supporters and future options for running of the Club. The representations were noted and relayed to the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder for consideration. In February 2021, the Chairman of the Football Club provided the Committee with a response to the representations made by The Shot Trust and also gave an update on current operations.

**Community Safety and Policing** – at the meeting in September, 2020 the Committee heard from Police representatives and the Safer North Hampshire team on current issues across the Borough. Specific queries raised by Members were also addressed. A watching brief on community safety and policing matters will maintained during 2021/22.

**Cabinet Champions** – The Committee received a presentation from the three Cabinet Champions at its meeting in March, 2021 Each Champion detailed the work/activities they had undertaken during 2020/21. The work and activities of the Champions would continue to be scrutinised during 2021/22.

- 3.4 Other items considered during the year are the Council's Workforce Report, an update on the healthy weights work, a presentation on air pollution across the Borough and the impacts of COVID-19 on the work of the Housing Options team. The Committee also instigated a briefing for all Members on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

#### 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 developed in 2021/22 by looking at best practice from other areas and reflecting the review work which has taken place on wider governance issues through the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee. The scrutiny training being provided arranged for all Members of the Committee will also pick up on the wider governance work.
- 4.2 Finally and importantly, I feel that the Committee has worked effectively together during the year. 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