



Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - East Pallant House on Tuesday 10 September 2019 at 9.30 am

**Members Present:** Mr A Moss (Chairman), Mrs C Apel, Mrs T Bangert, Mr J Elliott, Mr K Hughes, Mr H Potter, Mrs S Sharp and Mr A Sutton

**Members not present:** Mr T Johnson and Mr D Palmer

**In attendance by invitation:** Mr F Hobbs, Interim Chairman and the CDC appointed representative for Visit Chichester.  
Ms Adlum, Destination Marketing Executive  
Mr S Mills, Everyone Active Contract Manager

**Officers present:** Ms M Burgoyne (Economic Development Manager), Ms P Bushby (Divisional Manager for Communities), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs S Peyman (Divisional Manager for Culture), Mrs M Rogers (Benefits Manager), Ms K Standing (Divisional Manager, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

## 288 **Chairman's Announcements**

Apologies were received from Mr Bell, Mr Dignum and Mr Palmer.

## 289 **Minutes**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### *Matters Arising*

*Minute 285: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2018-19:* Members noted that full Council had received the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018-19 at its July meeting.

*Minute 284: Pallant House Gallery Monitoring Report:* With regard to the leaking roof, a member asked for an update on Pallant House Gallery's request for the Council to produce a maintenance plan for the building and asked officers to circulate the plan when ready. Mrs Apel, the Council's representative on Pallant House Gallery Trust and Company, advised that this matter would be discussed at the Gallery's Risk Committee the next day, after which she would be able to advise

in more detail. Mrs Hotchkiss advised that the Leader of the Council had met with Pallant House Gallery regarding the concerns raised. Mr Bacon, Building Services Manage, would shortly have a meeting with the Gallery. The tenant was responsible for the maintenance of the guttering and roof.

*Minute 285: Annual report 2018-19 and Work Programme 2019-20: Public Attendance:* Feedback was requested from the Communications Team on the steps taken to encourage public attendance at meetings. Mrs Hotchkiss advised that she would check to see if this meeting had been promoted on social media. She referred to the new Communications Plan being prepared that had been considered by the Consultations Task and Finish Group that included Overview and Scrutiny Committee members. The Chairman advised that he would speak to the Communications Team about publicising the Council's meetings on social media.

## 290 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

## 291 **Declarations of Interests**

Mr Sutton declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6 as the Chichester District Council appointed representative of Petworth Vision Ltd.

Mr Sutton declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12 as a Governor of Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust Council.

Mr Sutton declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12 as a member of Petworth PPG Group.

Mr Sutton declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12 as a sponsor and supervisor of the Petworth Gardens.

Mrs Sharp declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 7 as a former member of Everyone Active.

## 292 **Public Question Time**

The following public questions had been received as follows:

Mr Raincock had submitted questions in relation to item 6 (Chichester Vision, Chichester Bid and the Retail Offering, and Southern Gateway). Mr Trundle was in attendance on behalf of Mr Raincock to read out the questions as follows.

### **Question 1 – Masterplan -**

The Development Brief references a 'Masterplan for the area that was adopted in November 2017 as a Supplementary Planning Document'.

Does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee believe this Masterplan is appropriate in September 2019 and if so what economic benefits will it bring to Chichester?

What efforts have been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to challenge this Masterplan because if implemented the opportunity will be lost to modernise the

railway station, find a long term solution for the railway crossings and position Chichester as a 'go to' location on the south coast for a new creative industry, business, education and leisure?

Finally, does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee truly believe the Masterplan will be the catalyst for positive change across The District and in particular central Chichester?

### **The following answer as provided by Mr Moss**

Yes the Masterplan remains relevant today and remains the adopted statutory planning document. It is a sufficiently flexible document that allows a variety of solutions to be proposed for consideration and implementation. The potential benefits are significant and are fully described in the Project Initiation Document approved by Council previously but includes an estimated 365 homes; 1100 new jobs; improved night-time economy; business space and public realm. All members of Council were engaged in the production of the masterplan and the development brief and will continue to be so in order to ensure that its delivery delivers the change it is designed to.

### **Question 2 - Deliverability**

Does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee think the **whole** Masterplan is deliverable?

Does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee believe a developer would actually build out the quantum of commercial space (21,600 square meters) outlined in The Masterplan **without** a significant pre-let agreement in place from an end user of the space?

If so, what is the prospect of securing a significant pre-let from a credible end user to underpin the success of the Masterplan and has this been tested with the shortlisted developers?

### **The following answer as provided by Mr Moss**

As Mr. Raincock will be aware the Council and its partners are in the midst of a procurement process to appoint a development partner. Deliverability is a key consideration of this process and as such it would not be appropriate to comment in detail at this time suffice to say that a response to this question will form an important part of the Council's decision making process.

### **Question 3 – Timetable**

The proposed timetable for the appointment of a developer by Chichester District Council is set out in The Development Brief that was issued in May 2019 to parties interested in being appointed to regenerate The Southern Gateway. This brief clearly states the "appointment of the preferred bidder is expected to take place in October 2019. Contract signing is expected to take place in December 2019".

In addition, the timetable has been summarised in the 10th September 2019 presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The 26th November 2019 is a key date as it would seem it is the only time the Councillors will be given to opportunity decide on the selection of a development partner.

Please could the Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirm if the timetable is being adhered to?

If it is, please could the Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirm if there is sufficient time between now and on the 26th November 2019 to consider the points raised above and then allow adequate information to be presented to The Councillors so they can make an informed decision for Chichester on the 26th November 2019 with regard to the selection of a development partner for the regeneration of The Southern Gateway?

**The following answer as provided by Mr Moss**

Members have been kept closely involved in progress with the appointment, having previously approved the masterplan and input into the development brief and appointment criteria. We have received quarterly briefings and monthly bulletins. The timetable is on course.

Council have given the Deputy Chief Executive, himself a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors with almost 40 years of experience, over 30 of those practicing in Chichester District, with authority to select the final shortlist after consultation with the Leader. The final decision as to appointment will be made by Council. All Councillors will have the opportunity, in advance of the 26 November to meet the shortlisted developers and Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their November meeting will also be able to comment on the recommendation to Cabinet and Council before they meet on the 26 November. This is as agreed with Councillors.

The Chairman advised that Mr Trundle was welcome to stay for agenda item 6, the Cabinet member's report, where Southern Gateway would be addressed. Mr Trundle advised that he would like to have an open debate as this was a complicated subject. He commented that a standard response often did not necessarily get to the heart of the issue, which was the Masterplan.

Mr Milward-Oliver had submitted a public question in relation to item 8 (Ice Skating Update). Mr Milward-Oliver was not present to read out his question. Therefore, the question was not read out and the Committee was advised that a written response would be sent.

293 **Chichester Vision, Chichester BID and the Retail Offering and Southern Gateway - Growth and Place Portfolio**

Mr Dignum had been invited to present his priorities and areas of focus over the next year and to answer questions from the Committee on progress towards achieving the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. However, due to recent changes in Cabinet responsibilities, following Mr Dignum's resignation as Leader on health grounds, and in agreement with the Chairman no Cabinet member was present to address the Committee. The Committee was asked to note the report and agree any questions or actions they wish to make.

Members made a number of comments. It was important to state that the rural visions were an important consideration for the Council's Development Plan. Effort was also required to make stakeholders work closer together in future. If living and

working in the District was an aim of the Chichester Vision, then the issue of high house prices should be addressed in the Vision. With regard to the West Sussex Gigabyte Project and whether or not it would be completed on time, Mr Ward undertook to provide members with an answer outside of the meeting.

The Chairman read out an email submitted by Mr Palmer, who was unable to attend today, concerning his views on the Southern Gateway project, which expressed his support for a Task and Finish Group.

Members discussed the decision taken by the Council to progress the Southern Gateway project had taken place before the District Council elections in May 2019 and the Council now had a different political balance. Comments were made that there were still many issues unanswered as well indications during the Southern Gateway public consultation that the community had concerns about issues such as the railway crossing proposals. Concern was raised as to whether the timings for the southern gateway process achievable considering that the timetable for the partner agreement was scheduled for October 2019 and the signing of the contract scheduled for December 2019. However, it was noted that there was a fixed schedule set by the Council to be adhered to conform to the rules required by the process.

Members discussed whether or not a Southern Gateway Task and Finish Group should be set up, as soon as possible. Officer advice was requested on the proposal for a Task and Finish Group, at this late stage in the Southern Gateway process, whether at this late stage it was practicable and also sought advice concerning the impact on the development market if delayed.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Council, including this Committee, over an extended period of time had been determined in the delivery of the Southern Gateway project. However, he believed it was appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at how the project was progressing. It did not mean that the project as a whole was being questioned, as the Council was in favour of the redevelopment of Chichester.

Mr Ward responded to the advice requested by members. With regard to Mr Palmer's comments concerning different types of mix and uses on the sites, this was not necessarily precluded by the Masterplan and would be developed with the interested parties as the project moved through the procurement process. He confirmed that the Masterplan was a statutory document. Members should have regard to the fact that full Council had delegated authority to Mr Over, Executive Director and Deputy CEO, right up to the selection of the development partner. A decision could be made to overturn the project but would require consideration at full Council. However, the Council's Constitution did not allow consideration of a Council resolution within six months of taking the decision, unless material considerations came to light. At this late stage in the process the OJEU procurement process it would be extremely unsettling for the interested development partners to start unpicking the process, especially as shortlisting was currently taking place. He suggested that if members wished to gain further information the way forward could be for members to receive a briefing on the project from Mr Over instead of setting up a Task and Finish Group. If members wished to remove the delegated authority or to relook at the Masterplan, this

process would have to back to full Council, as it would involve the whole process would have to start again. Members should err on the side of caution so as not to send out any suggestions that the Council is uncertain about the Masterplan process that the Council went through.

The Chairman advised that if a Task and Finish Group was set up, a tight brief was required that would take into account the concerns raised by both the public and members but would not question the project itself. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group would be for the Committee can satisfy themselves that they are happy with the progress being made and to have an input to what is happening. Its purpose would not be to change the process as this was already set down, as Mr Ward had explained.

It was agreed that a Southern Gateway Task and Finish Group should be set up. Mrs Apel, Mr Hughes, Mr Palmer, Mrs Sharp and Mr Sutton agreed to take part on this Group. on the Task and Finish Group.

A comment was made that it could be seen that the projects in the smaller rural visions had taken on a life of their own in these smaller communities, and that the same enthusiasm should be given to the Chichester Vision, in particular for the pavement repairs project. Mrs Hotchkiss advised that the High Street it was now a high priority project for the Council.

The Chairman advised that he intended to have a meeting with the Growth and Place portfolio holder to discuss the points made by the members.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) That the Growth and Place portfolio report be noted; and
- b) That a Southern Gateway Task and Finish Group be set up and that the membership be confirmed as Mrs Apel, Mr Hughes, Mr Palmer, Mr Potter, Mrs Sharp and Mr Sutton.

## **294 Leisure Services Performance Review**

Mrs Peyman presented the report. Mr Mills, Everyone Active Contract Manager, was in attendance to answer questions.

Mrs Peyman reported that the Council continued to work closely with Everyone Active to ensure that the leisure needs of the community were being met. Mr Mills outlined the successes during 2018-2019, which included the achievement of an excellent Quest Assessment at all three sites. Westgate Leisure had also achieved outstanding in a Q Stretch assessment.

Officers answered members' questions as follows:

- Increasing the membership for the over 50 was something the centres were looking into. A review of over 50's activities had been undertaken and changes made where necessary. The centres were also looking at how activities should be marketed. After quarter 1 this year membership had increased.

- There were currently no plans to expand Bourne Leisure to include a community hub. However, Mr Mills advised he would be happy to look into the possibility. Although this centre was not at full capacity the sports hall was well used and Southbourne Community College had plans to development outside area, which it was hoped that the centre could utilise. Mrs Peyman added that the Sports and Leisure Team were consulted on future leisure needs as part of the planning development process and discussions took place with the parishes and leisure providers. Mrs Peyman undertook to liaise with Mrs Bangert about talking to Southbourne Parish Council about their needs.
- With regard to the use of green renewable energy, Mr Mills undertook to find out who supplied the energy to the centres. Mrs Peyman advised that the Westgate and Grange car parks were operated by the District Council. The car park at the Bourne was jointly operated with Southbourne Community College. Mrs Hotchkiss provided details of a grant received by the Council for the installation of electric charging points, of which the Grange. Mr Mills undertook to contact the school to discuss the possibility of providing electric charging points at the Bourne centre car park.
- Officers were aware of the difficulties experienced by some members when booking classes online, as spaces for some classes ran out quickly. Reviews were undertaken and where possible the number of classes were adjusted to suit demand.
- There was the opportunity for members of the public to be on the Westgate Leisure focus group. The Bourne and the Grange held meet the manager sessions. He undertook to carry out promotion of the focus group.
- With regard to apprentices and the living wage, and concerns raised that some were not able to pay for public transport to travel to work, Mr Mills advised that apprentices received a standard rate across the three leisure centres. He undertook to look into any individual cases.
- Sussex Otters Swimming Club, that provided swimming facilities for disabled people, had discontinued about six months ago following a reduction in numbers, despite Westgate encouraging them to hire less pool space to reduce their costs. The swimming pool was accessible to disabled users
- Mrs Peyman explained that the repairs to the Westgate roof were a complex issue. Work was taking place with a number of contractors to come up with a solution and to assess if an external scaffolding tower was required. The works were being undertaken to ensure it was safe and to reduce closures to the public.
- With regard to initiatives to encourage people to walk and cycle, a month long month long competition was held, which entered anyone who cycled into a prize draw to win a free month's membership.
- With regard to pricing and the effect on membership and a comment made by a member that anecdotal evidence had suggested this was a reason for some memberships not being renewed, core prices could not increase more than the consumer prices index and were submitted to the Council for approval.
- Mr Mills reported that memberships pricing promotions were centrally run throughout the year by head office. This was a reduction on the top level and not increases to membership prices.

The committee thanked the officers for an excellent report and congratulated them on the wellbeing activities to encourage people to take up sporting and other leisure activities.

## RESOLVED

- 1) That the 2018-19 Annual report from Everyone Active be noted; and
- 2) To endorse that the contractor is achieving satisfactory levels of performance against the outcomes in section 2.0 and the key performance indicators in section 4.0 of the 2018-19 annual report.

### 295 Visit Chichester Monitoring Report

Mrs Peyman was joined by Ms Adlam, Destination Marketing Executive, and Mr Hobbs, interim Chairman and the CDC appointed representative for Visit Chichester.

Mr Hobbs introduced the report. He thanked the previous Chairman, Mr Craig Gershater who had a challenging task to set up the corporate entity that became Chichester Vision. What had become clear since he had become the interim Chairman was the sense that the name 'Chichester' was causing disquiet in other areas of the District who felt that a lot of the activities were 'Chichester centric'. Visit Chichester was trying to increase tourism by encouraging people outside the District to visit. It was important, therefore, to consider how the project could broaden its message. He stressed that lot of work had been carried out to make it clearer that the project was about the Chichester District, including Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey and the whole of the Manhood area. He explained that the purpose of Visit Chichester was to 'Coordinate' all the fantastic tourism activities that went on within the District, To 'Help', particularly the smaller organisations that may not have the ability to promote themselves, and also in a more coordinated way to the wider community. 'Inspire' people to buy into Visit Chichester's message and 'Inform' because he felt that the Visit Chichester's messages were not necessarily getting out to the wider community. The potential for third party funding from a National cycling organisation was being investigated to fund a network of 20-30 bicycle destinations, such as shops or public houses around the District. Each destination could have maps promoting activities and local businesses etc, encourage people to stay overnight and possibly provide bicycle hire. He enthused that if Visit Chichester was doing its job it should present opportunities to the Council and other organisations for joint funded opportunities to make a difference to the community, assist the climate change agenda, the broader tourism agenda, and encourage everyone in the District to make a contribution and think about how they could inspire their own local communities. He referred to the fantastic education establishments in the District and advised that there could be an opportunity to engage some of these students in projects to help individual parishes. Most importantly young people could be given work experience or other opportunities that would assist their CVs.

The Chairman welcomed Ms Adlam to the meeting.

Ms Adlam provided details of current activities. A new membership scheme was being launched on 17 September 2019 at its first networking event at the Guildhall, Priory Park, Chichester. The aim was to bring the community and businesses together to benefit from what Visit Chichester. The first walking event, of 21 walks, had taken place recently over a weekend with 160 people attending. On a wider scale there were a number of exciting projects happening, such as, access to a new

PR database with the hope of increasing local and national newspaper coverage. Work had taken place with travel magazines to run Chichester District led features. Funding had been secured from the BID for the display of large train posters across 50 different sites to promote the Secret Chichester campaign, which was the first part of a concept called Secret Sussex, which would include mini campaigns for Midhurst, Petworth and Selsey. Discussions were in place with partners to help fund campaigns and discussions had taken place with the South Downs National Park for match funding. Visit Chichester was trying to leverage all the opportunities it could to get maximise exposure for the District.

The Chairman was pleased to hear that Visit Chichester's focus was on encouraging visitors to visit the whole of the District, as there were many wonderful things to do and places to visit. He commented that visitors could holiday in the District and not need to leave for a number of days as there was so much to do.

The Committee made the following comments which were answered by Mr Hobbs:

- *A request was made for someone, to speak to the Committee about Destination Management Plans:* Visit Chichester was hoping to run a session for all members and could include this topic. He advised that the amount of energy people put into Visit Chichester would be reflected back. If everyone was to look at themselves and persuaded their local tourism organisations to think about think about how they could contribute it would help maximise the message.
- *With regard to the cycle network, was there anyway, although it was noted this was not part of Visit Chichester's remit, that they could encourage the organisations that were able to do something to make a better and safe network?:* Although it was outside the their remit, if a brief was prepared on the matter, Visit Chichester would ask the Council for funding. If a network was created, it was extraordinary how other people would use that enabled environment to create something much more than they offered presently. Therefore he was asking for a different mind-set, as there could be more that local businesses could do to in terms of their proposition, e.g. bed and breakfasts could offer free bicycle use and maps so guests could use the network and its pit stops this provided an added value. We as a community through the organisation should help fund this, as if there was no investment people would come up with good ideas and use this to their advantage.
- *A comment was made that the northern areas of the District were the 'gateway' to Chichester. To pull all information together for the whole benefit of the District was something that could be done to bring visitors and economic benefits to the community.*
- *Were there any links to other colleges in the District that taught travel and tourism?:* Relationships were currently being rebuilt specifically with Chichester University to help the students find relevant work experience that would assist them in their future careers. If the Chichester University could be open minded about creating projects this would benefit both the students and Visit Chichester they were open to any suggestions. He added that formal contracts were agreed with any students working for them.
- *Role of ambassadors in parishes?:* Ambassadors could nominate a member to lead tourism and to think about what could be done within their own parishes.

- *A suggestion was made about providing advertising leaflets in public houses etc:* Ideally Chichester Vision would like to make the most of the social media age and have an app that to find details of the local facilities available, but this would cost money.

The Committee thanked Mr Hobbs and Ms Adlum for their summary of what Visit Chichester was doing for the District in terms of tourism and were pleased to hear the positivity, enthusiasm and vision for Visit Chichester.

The Committee agreed that a member presentation would be beneficial with the aim of encouraging members to promote Visit Chichester to their parishes as ambassadors to the District.

## **RESOLVED**

That the annual update report from Visit Chichester for 2018-19 be noted and it be agreed that Visit Chichester is achieving performance in line with the Service Level Agreement.

### 296 **Ice Skating Update**

The Committee considered the report circulated with the agenda.

Mrs Peyman provided an update to the Committee concerning the reinstatement of the grassed area in Priory Park following the use of part of the park for a temporary ice skating rink, as requested at its meeting on 12 March 2019. Following additional works required by the contractor, adverse weather conditions had resulted in the grass seed not initially taking as well as hoped and therefore additional seed was over sown at a cost of £190. This amount was taken from the contractor S3K Limited's deposit and the remaining £810 would be returned. With regard to the cost of the statutory work undertaken by Development Management for the planning application, Environmental Protection to assess issues such as noise nuisance, and Licensing to progress the premises licence, this work would still have to take place whether or not the event was on Council land. Officer time and costs for the hire of land element of the project were £669.79, which were higher than normal as it was a first event. The costs calculated for the amount of time that officers had spent dealing with complaints about the event was £6,992.70 (excluding on costs). New guidance had been issued with clear guidance on how to deal with the receipt of unreasonable complainants and the learning curves of holding the ice skating event had been taken into account when producing the guidance.

Members' made the following comments and received answers to questions as follows:

- *This was a one off learning curve but in future officers should ensure that the licensing fee covers the costs:* A peppercorn rent was charged due to it being the first event of its kind with the contractor taking on all the financial risk of running the event. If the event was repeated full rent for the hire of the land would be charged to the contractor. Officers believed that part of the costs had been recovered by car park usage during December 2018, which was estimated at £25k higher than the same period the previous year. Members were pleased to

hear that the additional car parking income which went some way to offset some of those costs and accepted that the officer time and costs could not be quantified.

- *Has the additional grass seed been successfully sown?:* The contractor had been required to reinstate the grass as part of a planning permission condition. A number of meetings were held with the contractor before it was decided that the grounds maintenance staff would carry out the over sowing at a charge to the contractor. Due to conditions, such as the weather, the grass did not take as well as hoped. The area is now fully reinstated, as well as the area where the archaeological dig took place on the event space.
- *Mrs Sharp was allowed by the Chairman to briefly paraphrase questions from residents that had been in contact with her who could not attend today's meeting:* With regard to the environmental concerns expressed about the use of generators, her Team worked closely with Council's Environmental Protection Team to ensure noise was at an acceptable level and that generators were located away from residential properties. The Council was continuing to investigate the installation of mains power at the Park to help mitigate some of the issues. With regard to social media reports, the Council had been in talks at the beginning of the year with the contractor about potentially holding the event again but those discussions had fallen quiet. In terms of the consultation, the Friends of Priory Park were consulted before the planning application was submitted. The public and residents had the opportunity to comment as part of the licensing and planning application process. The processes in place, concerning how liaison should take place with the local ward members, Friends of Priory Park and residents was being reviewed. It was confirmed that there had been no costs to the Council to replant the grass.

The Chairman referred to the Market Task and Finish Group and suggested that it would be a good opportunity for the Overview and Scrutiny to raise some of the points made about events. He expressed the view that these types of events should be encouraged in the District, as they increased footfall. However, a decision needed to be taken as to whether or not Priory Park was the right location. The installation of electricity would remove the noise and the need for generators. There was a need to come up with some really good ideas to provide events that would excite people.

Mrs Hotchkiss clarified that the purpose of the Market TFG was to look at market events not general events. A Parks Strategy was in development for which a Task and Finish Group had been set up. The results of consultation that had taken place for an Events Strategy were currently being worked through, which would be considered by this Committee and Cabinet.

The Chairman commented that consideration could be given to having a Task and Finish Group to look at the Events Strategy.

## **RESOLVED**

That the further information requested at the March 2019 Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding reinstatement of grass and a breakdown of costs that Chichester District Council incurred as a result of the ice rink be noted.

## 297 **Economic Development Strategy and Inward Investment and Growth Strategy**

Ms Burgoyne introduced the draft Economic Development Strategy and draft Inward Investment and Growth Strategy.

In response to members' questions, Ms Burgoyne undertook to look into the suggestion that growth and employment, page 81 (Priority 3), should be a primary aim. Ms Burgoyne provided details of the work that the Economic Development service had undertaken with businesses in preparation for Brexit that included providing links on the Council's website to enable businesses to prepare for Brexit. The West Sussex Growers Association had been looking into the effect of Brexit on the horticulture sector. With regard to the difficulties businesses had as a result of the high house prices in recruiting suitably qualified employees from Chichester College and the University of Chichester, as well as the issue of some secondary school exam results falling short of other local authority areas, Ms Burgoyne advised that the Economic Development service was able to work with partners to influence, which was why education was a secondary aim in the Economic Strategy. It was agreed that a suggestion for the Committee to look into education would be dealt under the Forward Plan item. A suggestion was made that reference to preserving and protecting the environment should be included. With regard to branding, Mrs Hotchkiss advised that the feedback received from businesses outside the District on the draft Inward Investment Strategy, included comments that they did not know what the District had to offer for businesses. A marketing branding package would be put together to attract businesses outside the District as well as providing support for those businesses already in the District to help them grow and to provide employment. It was felt by members that more should be done was made to reduce the amount of local produce being exported from the District.

The Chairman advised that having been the owner of a small business in the District he would send Ms Burgoyne his comments separately.

The Chairman expressed his support for both strategies. He felt that the Council should be selling itself more and suggested that the Draft Inward Investment and Growth Strategy's introduction could include more of the great things the District had to offer. He referred to a Coast to Capital meeting he had attended earlier this year, as the Council's representative, where their own ongoing strategy was discussed. He stressed the importance of being closely aligned with Coast to Capital's emerging revised strategy and offered to share his notes of the meeting he had written with Ms Burgoyne.

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the draft Economic Development Strategy and draft Inward Investment and Growth Strategy be noted prior to the strategies being considered by Cabinet.

## 298 **Universal Credit Review**

Mrs Rogers outlined the report and provided an overview of the impact the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) review in the District. Mrs Standing was also in attendance.

During the discussion members discussed the impact following the rollout of UC. There was concern that less than 100% of claimants received their payments on time, with just 86% receiving their payment on time in February this year and with the loss of income in real terms despite the introduction of easements. Foodbanks in Chichester had confirmed that the introduction of UC was responsible for the increase in people using them. Referring to paragraph 6.3.3., members considered that the introduction of an Anti-Poverty Strategy would be a positive move. The Council Tax Reduction scheme should be publicised more widely to ensure those in need were aware of the financial support available. Food banks were set up to help urgent one off cases not to be a necessary support for a large number of families for periods of up to six weeks. It was not fair that a number of charities, as a result of the introduction of UC, had to take on these urgent cases. With regard to the complex circumstances of some claimants, it was thought that around 60% of the homeless had problems with reading, writing and dyslexia. With that in mind, although support could be given concerning a homeless person's initial claim, many did not have the skills or resources to access IT on a regular basis to keep their claim details up to date.

Mrs Rodgers confirmed that the comments in paragraph 5.2 referred to the Department of Work and Pension's view of how the rollout of Universal Credit had gone. The Council's community referrers' project aimed to alleviate some of the issues created by UC. The UC was aimed at mitigating some of the issues caused by the introduction of UC. Nationally there had been a 52% average increase in the use of foodbanks in areas where UC had been rolled for a year ago, but she did not know if this information was reported to central Government.

Mrs Standing advised that the Department of Work and Pensions payments description of on time payment was payment within one month, which was in line with monthly salaries. The Citizens Advice Bureau had launched a Help to Claim scheme in April this year, specifically set up to help residents with their initial UC claim and to provide Work Coaches to provide additional support for the more vulnerable so they could be referred to the Job Centre to get additional specific advice. With regard to the concerns raised by members about the increase in food bank usage, the Department of Work and Pensions offered advance payments and budgeting loans for those waiting for their initial UC payment, as long as these were publicised and people were claiming they would go some way to alleviate people struggling financially.

With regard to the advance payments and budgeting loans available, concern was expressed by members that they could draw claimants into a continuous cycle of borrowing money and trying to catch up, which was not a solution to the problem. With regard to paragraph 6.6.1, it was noted that a reason given to the food banks for the increase in their usage was because, while waiting for their UC payment, claimants did not want to take an advance payment as they were worried they would not be able to pay it back.

Mrs Rogers confirmed that the local food banks had echoed the reasons above for their increased usage. Referrals to the local food banks at the Council were made by the Council's Housing Team and the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme. The housing Team intended to undertake some work with the food banks to get a better understanding of the reasons for their increased use. Mrs Rogers advised

that she was not aware of the number of claimants whose social housing may be at risk because of rent arrears that had resulted from issues with UC. However, she was aware that the Housing Team's new software programme would record the number of people seeking homeless advice where UC credit was sighted as a factor. For the purposes of the report social landlords had been contacted to see if the Council could engage with them about the issue and responses were awaited. Any future reviews would seek to engage with them to establish the number of UC claimants.

A suggestion was made that a Task and Finish Group should be set up to look at the introduction of an overarching Anti-Poverty Strategy, in connection with paragraphs 6.3.3 and 6.3.4. However, following advice from the Leader of the Council, speaking from the public gallery, about the amount of officer and member time involved, it was agreed to discuss this matter under the Work Programme item, as that may be a better way forward.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the report aims to give an overview of the impact of Universal Credit and recommends the following;
  - a) That the impacts of Universal Credit continue to be monitored to inform service delivery of Revenues, Housing and Communities;
  - b) That officers continue to consider how adverse effects can be mitigated by the provision of Council Services and partnership working; and
  - c) That relevant Council policies be revised to ensure that they support those that are vulnerable to welfare reform.

## 299 **Social Prescribing**

Mrs Bushby outlined the evaluation report and provided details of progress and successes during year 1 of the Chichester Social Prescribing service. It was aimed at giving the right support at the right time to those in need of the service. It was hoped that members agreed that the evaluation reflected the success of the project so far, with the caveat that the service was new and there was a lot more work to be done. She clarified that social prescribing was not concept. It was an approach that looked at the demand on medical services for non-medical services. Neither was the project a response to welfare reform, although it was noted that almost a third of the referrals were as a result of welfare and benefits.

Mrs Bushby responded to members' questions and comments. She undertook to find out if any research had been undertaken in respect of links of mild to moderate special needs, such as dyslexia or autism spectrum disorders to depression and mental health issues. There was not necessarily a direct link that having such a condition would affect their mental health, but if someone had a condition that limited their ability to access services that may have a negative impact on their mental health. The initial assessments carried out by the social prescribers of clients specific needs would include signposting to other services they may require.

Mr Sutton advised that, as the Council's representative on the Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust Council of Governors, and as a member of the Community Trust and a member of a patient participation group at a GP surgery where a Social

Prescriber was active, he had practical experience of the Social Prescribing service. He considered that there was a strong referral system to help signpost people to the services they required. The project at Petworth had led to a reduction in social isolation in the elderly and could be used in innovative ways. He cited Duncton Parish Council as an example of engaging with the community to reduce social isolation, for their elderly residents.

Mrs Bushby explained the professional background and experience of the social prescriber, which included social work and homeless services backgrounds. The recruitment process had specifically looked for clear indications that the prescribers could deal with individuals with complex issues. Initially the project had not seen large reductions in the demand on GPs. However, what had been seen was a reduction in the number of social economic reasons for seeing a GP and as a result these patients now made appointments for more relevant issues. She had advised that other social prescribing projects had seen similar results. With regard to making the service more secure, in particular ensuring there was funding going forward, Mrs Bushby referred members to paragraph 5.2 of the report. She explained that there were risks with the funding sustainability it was in the NHS England's long term plan, who had committed five years funding for the project. Funding would be sought at the November Cabinet meeting for future funding.

Members were very supportive of the project the outcomes achieved in the first year. They asked for their thanks to be passed on to officers for such a good report.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee has considered the Chichester Social Prescribing report for year 1 and notes the following;

- 1) The progress and success of year 1 of the service; and
- 2) Outcomes of the service and agrees the next steps in the evaluation report.

## **300 Corporate Plan Mid-Year Review - Terms of Reference**

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Task and Finish Group (TFG) would work to the agreed terms of reference and present their findings to the next meeting. It would focus on the Amber and Red markers. The Committee would be expected to ask questions and look at the report based on the terms of reference.

Mr Buckley reported that this year the report included a summary of the performance indicators and projects that supported the Corporate Plan. This was to give the wider Committee the opportunity to see if there were any specific projects that they wished the TFG to consider. He advised that the Council's performance indicators were produced quarterly and were available to view on the Council's website on a quarterly basis.

Mr Hyland stressed that when the TFG's report was presented to the Committee it was not for members of the wider Committee to highlight other areas of performance that the TFG had not focused on.

The Committee confirmed they had no specific issues to raise that they wished the TFG to consider.

The Terms of Reference for this TFG were agreed.

It was agreed to seek one further volunteer from the wider membership.

## **RESOLVED**

That Mrs Apel, Mr Moss and Mr Sutton (Chairman) are confirmed as members of the Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group.

**Post meeting note:** Subsequent to the meeting no volunteers from the wider membership were forthcoming.

### 301 **Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the latest Forward Plan.

### 302 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the latest Work Programme.

The following items were added to the Work Programme for further involvement by this Committee:

- *Process of the Pay Review:* Mr Ward advised that it would not be possible for officers to report the review details of individual staff or groups of individuals. The whole process had already been reported upon to both Joint Employee Consultative Panel, as well as full Council where the final decision was made prior to the District Council election. The reports and minutes were available for all members to read. The process had already been considered and therefore if reviewed by this Committee it would be a duplication creating additional work. He suggested that members may wish to take into account this information when deliberating whether or not to add this to the work programme. The Chairman suggested, which was agreed by members, to take the report as it stood to give members, especially for the newer members in office, the opportunity to understand it in the first instance. Mr Ward confirmed that it would not be a confidential report unless members got into the detail of individual staff, which would not be appropriate anyway.
- *Education Update from WSCC Education Service:* Requested that an officer from West Sussex County Council be invited to attend when the item was considered.
- *Universal Credit – Anti Poverty Strategy:* With regard to task and finish groups, Mr Ward reminded members of Section 5, Protocol 5.7 of the Council's Constitution concerning the creation of task and finish groups. Section 10 stated that the Business Routing Panel has overall control of the number of task and finish groups created, as they created additional officer time with some lasting for one meeting and others lasting a period of several months. It would depend on whether members were keen to see an Anti-Poverty Strategy investigated and drafted by officers, which is something that they can just get on with. He suggested that if this was the case, officers would take it forward in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder. If members wished to see the

draft Strategy before its consideration by Cabinet they could do. However, if members wished a much broader subject that would be too complex or too lengthy a debate to get into at the meeting, or contained sensitive information, a task and finish group would be suitable. It was agreed that the subject matter should be broadened out, as a general anti-poverty strategy, to look at the social issues and challenges in these areas faced by those in the District in receipt of Universal Credit, food banks etc.

Current Work Programme Items:

*Air Quality Action Plan – Review of existing and briefing paper on proposals for new Midhurst AQAP – 19 November 2019:* The proposed new Air Quality Management Area, due to be considered by Cabinet on 1 October 2019, was Westhampnett Road, Chichester. Mr Potter raised his concern that the introduction of the new roundabout at Westhampnett Road, to service the proposed new supermarket and new nearby housing developments, would exacerbate the issue. Officers would provide the full details to Mr Potter outside of the meeting. Any concerns could be raised at the next meeting when this item was considered and Mr Potter may wish to raise the matter at the next Cabinet meeting.

**303 Chairman's Closing Remarks**

The Chairman announced that Mr Hyland and Mrs Rudziak, who had looked after the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a number of years, would no longer support the Committee, as going forwards it would be the Divisional Manager to support the Committee. He thanked them both for the scrutiny work they had carried out during this time and Mr Hyland for the fantastic support that he had given to the previous Chairman, Mrs Apel, as well as himself. He welcomed Mrs Bushby, Communities Divisional Manager, who would in future be the Committee's support officer.

**304 Late Items**

There were no late items for consideration.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm

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CHAIRMAN

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Date: