

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Annual Report 2014/15

Introduction by the Chairman

It seems extraordinary to think this will be the last year that this report will be prepared with the excellent committee we have at the moment. None of us knows what the situation will be after May 7th. Whatever happens there will be changes with the committee.

On that note I feel we have achieved another very constructive and full year. As you can see there have been a number of Task and Finish groups which have made useful recommendations, most of which have been accepted. The 70% acceptance rate by Cabinet on the committee's recommendations I would say is commendable. I hope the new committee will be able to be as proactive.

Scrutiny is a part of local government which must be recognised for the good and constructive messages it sends. It should be applied to all parts of our lives. I do hope that in the future we will have the time to put an issue forward for the national scrutiny awards.

Once again thank you members of the committee for all the support, suggestions and help you have given me. Thank you Steve, Bambi and Lisa for all the work you do and I hope all concerned are really proud of what has been done.

Clare Apel
Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny at Chichester District Council

Scrutiny is the way in which non-executive members of the council hold the Cabinet to account. They do this by reviewing existing council policy or decisions and by inputting into the development of new policies before the Cabinet approves these. In some cases they may ask for a decision (made by the Cabinet) to be re-considered before it is implemented to make sure all possible outcomes are thought through. These are called call-ins.

The committee has the power to hold partner authorities and other public bodies to account by requiring information from them and requiring them to 'have regard' to the committee's report or recommendations.

Setting the OSC work programme for 2014/15

The 2014/15 OSC work programme was developed taking into account:

- the Corporate Plan projects agreed by Cabinet
- the Forward Plan of Cabinet key decisions over the next few months
- projects identified from individual Service Plans
- items proposed or raised by Members
- topics included in last year's work programme which were delayed
- topics requiring members' involvement suggested by the Business Routeing Panel

A number of Task and Finish Groups were set up to carry out reviews in more depth and to report back to the main committee. These task and finish group reviews are detailed later in

the report. Space was left in the work programme for topical issues that often arise during the year.

All Members were consulted in the development of this work programme through a member workshop held on 23 May 2014.

The impact and influence of scrutiny

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee met five times in 2014/15. The Chairman meets with the committee half an hour before each meeting to enable discussion about the agenda items and to agree a line of questioning for each topic.

Task and Finish Groups are used to hear witnesses and scrutinise papers in detail and report to one committee in order to maximise the volume and depth of its work.

A total of 10 recommendations have been made by the committee to the Cabinet during the year. Seven recommendations were agreed, with three yet to be considered, giving a 70% achievement at this stage.

There were no call-ins' this year. Cabinet Members have shown strong support for the scrutiny process by attending relevant OSC meetings.

Of the 48 members on the council, 15 are on the OSC. With Cabinet Members and other interested members attending meetings or involved in task and finish groups this relates to 71% of all members being involved in scrutiny in some form or other during the year.

Members' training and development

- Mrs C Apel attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conference and awards on 10 June 2014.
- Mr A Chaplin attended the South East Seminar on developing affordable housing supply and examining market schemes on 2 July 2014.
- Mrs C Apel also attended the LGiU Being an effective Councillor: Influencing Skills day on 20 November 2014.

Main areas of work for overview and scrutiny this year and outcomes/achievements

Areas of focus	Outcomes/achievements
Review of Planning Enforcement Strategy	The committee endorsed the revised Planning Enforcement Strategy and recommended it to Cabinet, who approved the strategy on 9 September 2014.
The Novium	The committee considered and endorsed the vision, aims and objectives in the Novium Business Development Strategy and recommended it to Cabinet. Cabinet subsequently agreed the Strategy, one of the key actions of which was the removal of charging for entry to local collections from 17 November 2014.
Development Management Service	The committee considered the Development Management Service performance review and noted the new staffing structure and the improved performance of the team. The committee recommended to Cabinet that the Planning Committee structure be reviewed in May 2016, one year after implementation.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2013-18	The committee noted the housing delivery achievements and the delivery of milestones in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan and endorsed the new Housing Strategy Delivery Plan dates.
The adoption of new models of affordable housing delivery including shared equity	The committee considered the new models of affordable housing delivery and approved the proposed Intermediate Housing Policy. The committee requested a future paper on community land trusts in 2015.
Midhurst Community Leisure Facilities	The committee considered the Grange operational report and noted the operational performance of the Grange against the original budget. The committee will consider the post project evaluation in July 2015.
Careline Business Plan	The committee considered the Careline Business Plan progress report. The committee noted Chichester Careline's progress against the business plan for 2013/14 and financial and business planning position in 2014/15.

Task & Finish Groups

The work of the Task and Finish Groups is described below along with the outcomes achieved.

Tourism Task and Finish Group

Mr G McAra (Chairman), Mrs C Apel, Mr N Thomas, Mrs N Graves and Mrs B Tinson

Areas of focus – Review of the delivery model which Visit Chichester is working to and consideration as to whether the structure is right and fit for purpose. A strong destination management organisation (DMO) for the district, raising the profile of the district as a visitor destination and increasing tourism business to the district. Consideration of the in-kind support which the Council can provide to Visit Chichester. The Tourism Task and Finish Group considered the Visit England model and analysis of other delivery models e.g. Visit York, Visit Winchester, GoLakes, Visit Peaks, Canterbury, Oxford etc. to understand the attributes of the best performing models and how to encourage private sector investment and new models of funding. All council members were invited to a presentation on tourism and destination management from Mrs Melanie Sensicle, Chief Executive of Visit County Durham on 22 July 2014. The group also considered the Coastal West Sussex study into destination management.

Outcomes – The final report has been delayed to the March 2015 meeting and the outcome will be updated prior the presentation of this report to Cabinet and Council.

Committee Audio System and Recording Meetings Task and Finish Group

Mr S Lloyd-Williams (Chairman), Mr P Clementson, Mr R Hayes, Mr G Hicks and Mr G McAra

Areas of focus – At Council on 23 September 2014, when considering a recommendation from Cabinet regarding Government regulations on openness of Local Government, including a requirement to allow any member of the public to take photographs, audio record or film proceedings of all meetings, excluding Part 2 agenda items, a member reminded the Council of the previous proposal to audio record certain meetings which had failed to gain majority support. He was concerned that the Council would not have its own full record of proceedings to rebut any misrepresentation or out-of-context use of press or public recordings. Council members agreed and asked him to bring forward for

consideration a further proposal on recording meetings. At the November 2014 meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members agreed to set up a task and finish group to consider options around a replacement microphone/audio system and to reconsider future recording of meetings. The group discussed options to resource future audio recording or webcasting of the Council's meetings. Three suppliers of microphone systems were invited to demonstrate to the task and finish group and other members.

Outcomes – The group will recommend to the OSC at its meeting on 17 March 2015 that a new microphone system be purchased from the Council's Asset Replacement Programme budget with the capability of audio recording council meetings. The group also recommended a one year pilot be carried out to audio record and publish online Council, Cabinet, Planning and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. The group decided against progressing webcasting arrangements.

Community Safety Review Task and Finish Group

Mrs N Graves, Mr B Hayes (Chairman), Mrs G Keegan, Mr H Potter and Mr N Thomas

Areas of focus – The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory duty in accordance with Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 to review the district's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) by holding the CSP to account for its decision making, scrutinising the performance of the CSP and undertaking policy reviews of specific community safety issues. The group held two meetings at which various partners were asked to attend to give evidence. The Community Interventions Manager and Head of Community Services gave members an update on the various projects and initiatives they are contributing to in the CSP Business Plan. Chief Inspector Justin Burtenshaw, District Commander of Chichester, Sussex Police spoke on crime performance, challenges and priorities. The WSCC Better Communities Manager spoke about the Safer West Sussex Partnership work. Mrs E Lintill, Chairman of the CSP and the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) talked about the relationship between the CSP and the PCP and the council's Community Safety Officer and a representative from A2 Dominion talked about partnership working in Chichester East.

Outcomes – The final report of the group will be considered at the March 2015 meeting of the OSC committee with any recommendations being made to the CSP.

Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group

Mr J Cherry (non-member), Mrs P Dignum (Chairman), Mr S Lloyd-Williams and Mr H Potter

Areas of focus – To consider mid-year progress on actions and targets in the Corporate Plan and to identify any further action that needs to be taken to challenge poor performance and to reduce any risk to an acceptable level.

Outcomes – The council's key projects were monitored for successful delivery. After review the group was happy with action proposed to be taken to address poor or delayed performance.

Education Task and Finish Group

Mr B Hayes, Mrs N Graves, Mrs J Tassell and Mrs Tinson (Chairman).

Areas of focus – The group was established, following a previous OSC review in 2012, to consider the current performance of schools in the Chichester district, the current status of secondary schools and children's readiness for school (i.e. the under 5s at first entry to primary school). The group received presentations from the Corporate Information Officer with educational performance data of Chichester primary and secondary schools and information on the supply of pre-school settings across the district; the WSCC Head of

Schools to clarify and validate the performance figures and explain any slippage in performance, to give his opinions on the overall direction of travel; to explain WSCC role in managing performance and WSCC relationship with and influence over academies; the WSCC General Advisor for Area A Schools to give more in-depth information about desktop performance monitoring on school results carried out and to explain value added scores and students' improvement information; the WSCC Principal Manager Early Childhood, Children's Services to hear about Early Years and 'readiness for school' initiatives, to receive an overview of early years provision in the area and to explain the key themes and areas of action; the Community Interventions Manager, to hear about the work which her team is doing as part of the Think Family Programme and on Early Help strategies and the Director of Education, The Kemnall Academies Trust, to give his perspective on performance in the Trust's schools, their direction of travel and related details, his views on readiness for school issues and what we can do/how we can work closely together to identify and ensure help for those families who need it.

Outcomes –The group was reassured on a number of points. The key points from the review were that the Council should commit to support family friendly policies and consider how it could support Early Years and Early Help structures which support families with young children seeking or identified as needing help, that the Council works with WSCC to increase funding for the Think Family Phase 2 by working with partners who have made savings as a result of the benefits of the Think Family Programme e.g. DWP, police, accident and emergency etc; and that an open dialogue is maintained with local schools through Members' involvement as governors. The OSC agreed to undertake a further review of educational attainment in the district in early 2016 when there may be new Government educational policies and performance monitoring targets in place and it is likely that more schools in the Chichester district will have converted to academy status. The recommendations to support family friendly policies and support Early Help were taken to Cabinet on 3 March 2015 to support a recommendation to implement the WSCC Early Help program.

Budget Task and Finish Group

Overview and Scrutiny Members: Mr R Hayes (Chairman), Mr S Lloyd-Williams and Mrs B Tinson and Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Members: Mr R Marshall, Mrs T Tull and Mr A French

Areas of focus – This group has representatives from both the Overview & Scrutiny (performance and policy remit) and Corporate Governance & Audit Committees (governance and risk remit). The group considered the 5 Year Financial Model and Statement of Resources 2014-15 to 2019-20 and the projected revenue budget variations for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Outcomes – Members involvement with budget scrutiny prior to presentation of the Budget to Cabinet in February 2015 and Full Council approval in March 2015. The group were satisfied with the explanation of projected variances on the 2014/15 budget.

WSCC Select Committee liaison

The following members have attended WSCC Select Committees and reported back to the committee on issues of interest to the Chichester district and local residents.

- Mrs C Apel - Children & Young People's Services Select Committee
- Mrs P Dignum – is the council's representative on the Health & Adults Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

The Council can submit concerns regarding any health issue to the HASC for consideration via its Business Planning Group (BPG) which meets quarterly. A concern in 2014 was the

proposed new depot for South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB) in Tangmere. Representatives from SECAMB were invited to present to the full Council before its September meeting. Members were reassured that there would be no detriment to service delivery for Chichester residents.

West Sussex Joint Scrutiny

Mrs C Apel is on the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group, a group of scrutiny members from the seven districts and boroughs of West Sussex who get together to suggest joint scrutiny reviews on issues of common interest to all authorities.

Following a review of the previous year's operation, the Joint Scrutiny terms of reference and protocol were updated in July 2014.

A review of Community Advice Services was carried out by a task and finish group in the Autumn 2014, following which the final report was circulated to all District and Borough Councils in West Sussex. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were consulted for comment in advance of the report's consideration by Cabinet in October 2014. Cabinet approved the recommendations which were to act jointly with WSCC and its District and Borough Councils to procure a Community Advice Service for a period of five years with the option to extend the contract for up to a further five years. The service specification was agreed along with the annual funding contribution.