

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Annual Report 2018-19

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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) or its task and finish groups may require any member of the Cabinet, any chief officer, and/or any divisional manager to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit. Other public sector or public service officials, external partners and/or residents and stakeholders may also be invited to address the committee, discuss issues of local concern and-or answer questions. Recommendations may be made to the Cabinet or directly to Council. In scrutinising an external partner or partnership, the recommendations may be made directly to that body. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may be reported to the Cabinet or the Council, and the chairman of the committee shall be entitled to address the meeting on the committee's views.

Setting the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2018-19

The 2018-19 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 had been 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 of the committee were consulted on the development of this work programme at a member workshop.

The impact and influence of scrutiny

OSC held five ordinary meetings in 2018-19. The Chairman meets with the committee before each meeting to enable discussion about the agenda items and to agree the key issues to be explored on each topic.

There was one call-in this year concerning a decision by Cabinet to dispose of a development site at the Grange in Midhurst.

The call-in was heard by the Committee on 18 September 2018 and the original decision upheld by the Committee.

A total of 9 recommendations were made by the committee to the Cabinet or Leader during the year. 7 recommendations were agreed. 2 recommendations related to the Ice Skating Rink review - Cabinet's response to the recommendations was that the tender process would be reviewed if the ice rink returned to council land and if new tenders were required a report would be brought back to Cabinet and that the decision for hire of council land was made under delegated authority to officers and that all statutory functions must continue in accordance with statutory guidance and timescales.

Mrs P Plant was nominated by the committee to be its representative on the corporate Leisure Contract Management Task and Finish Group. Mr Lloyd-Williams and Mr Martin were nominated by the committee to be its representative on the ICT Task and Finish Group. Mr N Galloway was nominated by the committee to be its representative on the corporate Novium Options Task and Finish Group as well as an observer on the Growth Board.

Members' training and development

- Caroline Neville attended the inaugural CIPFA/CfPS Councillor conference on 13 September 2018.
- Mrs Apel attended the Strategies for Success – National Local Government Scrutiny conference on 4 December 2018.
- There were two newly appointed members to the committee this year, Dr O'Kelly and Mr Moss, who received induction training in June 2018.

Main areas of work for OSC this year and outcomes-achievements

Areas of focus	Outcomes-achievements
<p>The Novium Museum</p> <p>Sarah Peyman</p>	<p>The committee received an update and considered the procurement exercise to test the market for the future operational management of the Novium Museum and Tourist Information Services. Of the three options available to the Council it recommended to Cabinet that the preferred option was to retain the existing in house management, but undertake a review of the business plan to examine opportunities for generating additional income and/or reducing expenditure. Areas to be examined included an improved café/restaurant offer, reduced opening hours, increased donations etc. It was recommended that the review of the business plan should be completed by the end of October 2018. The committee requested a progress update at its November meeting. Cabinet agreed with this recommendation and resolved to set up a Novium Task and Finish Group tasked to oversee progress with the review of the business plan. The Committee then received a report on progress to date and it was recommended that in agreeing the draft Novium Business Plan the Group should ensure that the Plan addresses options to reduce expenditure in both the short and medium term. The donation figures were circulated to members on 29 November 2018. The draft Business Plan for the Novium and Tourist Information Services was recommended to Cabinet and approved.</p>

<p>Sickness Levels within the Council</p> <p>Joe Mildred</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed the current position regarding sickness absence and the proposal to re-write the Absence Management Policy and the Stress Impact Assessment. The Committee requested more information on the Council's sickness levels due to the increasing number of average sickness days since 2012, especially concerning the Council's long term sickness and compared to the much lower estimated national figure. The committee was provided with a progress update at its meeting in January 2019. The progress update on the management and levels of sickness reported that the Wellbeing Team was working alongside a professor from Portsmouth University regarding the Council's approach to managing stress, as well as the results of the anonymous stress survey also reported to Joint Employee Consultative Panel.</p> <p>It was agreed that future progress updates would be most appropriate as part of the Corporate Plan TFG as sickness absence is one of the indicators covered. The progress over the last six months and latest sickness absence figures was noted.</p>
<p>Award of a Services Concessions Contract</p> <p>Jane Dodsworth</p>	<p>The Committee noted the outcome of the review of the Council's alarm monitoring service and proposed disposal of the service to an identified provider operating within the health and social care sector. Cabinet agreed with this recommendation following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services.</p>
<p>Chichester Enterprise Centre</p> <p>Alan Gregory</p>	<p>The Committee noted the post project evaluation report for the Chichester Enterprise Centre development, and the significant underspend of the capital budget had been achieved and endorsed that the project had been well-managed overall.</p>
<p>Council Tax Review of Locally Defined Discounts and Premia</p> <p>Paul Jobson</p>	<p>The Committee recommended that Cabinet apply the proposed Council Tax discounts in the report for the 2019-2020 financial year and that Cabinet set the Council Tax empty homes premium at 100% for the 2019-2020 financial year, providing that the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax Bill (2017-19) was given Royal Assent. Cabinet agreed with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Leisure Services Performance Review</p> <p>Sarah Peyman</p>	<p>The Committee endorsed the view of the members task and finish group that the contract was on course to provide the outcomes it set out to achieve and that customer satisfaction continued to exceed the targets set within the contract.</p> <p>The Committee noted the 2017-18 Annual Report from Everyone Active and endorsed that the contractor is achieving satisfactory levels of performance against the outcomes in section 3.0 and the key performance indicators in section 4.0 of the 2017-18 annual report.</p>
<p>Reducing single use plastics</p> <p>Tom Day</p>	<p>The Committee considered the draft plan that identified three main focus points. With regard to specific actions that the Council could consider, Members felt that the Council could lead by example and suggested that the Council could advise its suppliers to provide alternatives to plastic wrapping, committee paper</p>

	despatch envelopes should be replaced with recyclable envelopes, staff should be encouraged to use glass, or recyclable bottles where appropriate, rather than single use plastics and that 'easy to do' priorities should be identified in the plan. The Committee asked that officers consider the comments of the Committee in preparing the subsequent draft of Single Use Plastics Action Plan and that a one-year review of progress against the action plan be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before the end of 2019.
Southern Gateway Development Brief Paul Over	The Committee received an update on progress with the implementation of the Southern Gateway Regeneration project and considered the draft Development Brief. Members felt that greater emphasis could be placed on the social and sustainability aspirations of the Brief and asked that officers note the considerations of the Committee.
Review of Business Improvement District Tania Murphy	<p>The Committee noted the report relating to the Chichester Business Improvement District (BID). The Committee agreed a proposal by Mr Ransley to ask officers to prepare a report to the Cabinet and the Council in conjunction with the BID team to address the challenges identified in the report (and at this meeting) and advise the Council how they could be mitigated or maximised.</p> <p>Following discussions with the Chairman and Mr Ransley after the meeting concerning his proposal an item on the BID will be added to the OSC work programme for an update report to return at an agreed timescale, after which if appropriate a recommendation can be made to the Cabinet.</p> <p>The statistics relating to the use of the Christmas Park and Ride service were circulated following the meeting.</p>
Visit Chichester Monitoring report Sarah Peyman	The Committee received and noted the six month update from Visit Chichester.
Pallant House Gallery Monitoring report Sarah Peyman	That the six monthly update from Pallant House Gallery be noted as satisfactory. A full annual report will be presented to the Committee on 18 June 2019.
Communications between Chichester District Council and South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Tony Whitty	<p>The Committee noted the feedback in relation to communications between CDC and the SDNPA since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 November 2017 and that the invitation made by the SDNPA to hold a further meeting to address any outstanding concerns be agreed, following which officers be requested to draft a member protocol to explain the communication within the SDNPA planning application process and application call-in procedure.</p> <p>The meeting between SDNP and members has been delayed until after the May 2019 District elections.</p>

<p>Policing in Chichester District</p> <p>Pam Bushby</p>	<p>The Committee at the previous meeting, when considering the TFG report, discussed policing matters and agreed they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the current levels of crime in the District, the impact of the new policing structure and difficulties in reporting crime to the 101 telephone line with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Inspector. Chief Inspector Kris Ottery and Inspector Sharon Sawyer were in attendance and provided answers to members' questions. The Police Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne was unable to attend the meeting.</p>
<p>Chichester Festival Theatre Monitoring report</p> <p>Sarah Peyman</p>	<p>The Committee received the annual report from Chichester Festival Theatre, which was noted.</p> <p>It was agreed that a more detailed answer whether or not the deferred income brought forward indicated a change in trends would be provided outside of the meeting. The response received was as follows: In speaking to our Finance Director, this does not reflect a negative trend. Rather, the deferred income at this stage of the year in 2017 was exceptionally high due to particularly high sales for the first Festival Theatre production of the 2017 season. We believe this was due to high-profile casting, Richard Wilson in <i>Forty Years On</i> – a popular play by a popular playwright (Alan Bennett), and it being the opening production of Daniel Evans first season, which he was also directing – as referenced in our report (page 17 of the agenda pack) this particular production saw the highest number of tickets ever sold in the history of CFT for a single play. Deferred income moving into Festival 2018 was more reflective of the general level of advance sales we have experienced in previous years, with the positive exception of 2017. We would be happy to answer any further questions on this matter.</p>
<p>Amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme</p> <p>Liz Reed</p>	<p>That the amendments to Chichester District Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, following a decision by the Ombudsman, which clarifies the eligibility of members of the Armed Forces and former Service Personnel to join the Council's Housing Register were noted. It was also agreed that parish councils would be notified of the amendments. The Housing Allocations Scheme has been updated in accordance with the requirements of the Ombudsman thereby providing local connection status to all serving and ex serving military personnel, within 5 years of discharge.</p>
<p>Ice Rink Review</p> <p>Sarah Peyman</p>	<p>The Committee considered the review of the ice rink held in Priory Park, Chichester over the Christmas period from 1 December 2018 to 6 January 2019. The Committee requested that officers provide an update report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recording the reinstatement of the grassed area in Priory Park before any deposit is returned to the contractor and requested that the Council is provided with a thorough breakdown of all costs that the Chichester District Council are incurring as a result of the Ice Rink, noting they are offset by various fees. It was recommended to Cabinet that if the Council wish to run a</p>

	<p>future temporary ice rink, Priory Park or any other site would be offered at an open-tender commercial rent, and that no decision will be made on the repeat of an ice rink until the new Council, after 2 June 2019. However the intention had been from 2 May 2019 and this date was reported to Cabinet.</p> <p>Outcomes: at the Cabinet meeting the following decisions were made: 1) If a decision is made for the ice rink to return to council land, the tender process undertaken for 2018 will be reviewed. If following this review further tenders are required a report will be brought back to the Cabinet; and 2) The decision for hire of land is under delegated authority to officers and all statutory functions must continue in accordance with statutory guidance and timescales.</p>
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Task & Finish Groups

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

Budget Task and Finish Group

Overview and Scrutiny Members: Mrs C Apel, Mr G Hicks, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr J Ransley and Mrs P Plant

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Members: Mrs P Tull (Chairman) and Mr P Wilding

Areas of focus – This group has representatives from both OSC (performance and policy remit) and Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (governance and risk remit). The group considered the projected revenue budget variations for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Outcomes – Members involvement with budget scrutiny prior to presentation of the Budget to Cabinet in February 2019. The group was satisfied with the explanation of the projected variances on the 2019-20 budget.

Community Safety Review Task and Finish Group

Mrs P Dignum (Chairman), C Neville and Mr H Potter

Areas of focus – OSC 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 in February 2018. Ms P Bushby, Divisional Manager for Communities, outlined the CSP annual report 2018/19, CSP performance plan 2018/21 and CSP spending plan 2018/19.

The following witnesses gave evidence:

- Mrs Eileen Lintill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), emphasised the main purpose of that panel in holding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account.
- Ms Emily King, the Principal Manager Community Safety and Wellbeing at WSCC provided an overview and a general progress update on the SWSP Community Safety Plan and how Chichester District Council links in.
- Acting Chief Inspector Kris Ottery of Sussex Police outlined some priority partnership

work around serious organised crime.

Outcomes – The TFG reassured the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the required level of scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has been achieved and that the performance of the CSP is good and that evidence of effective partnership working in the District had been demonstrated. It was agreed that next year's review should focus on cybercrime, drugs and the impacts of any West Sussex County Council (WSCC) budget cuts on areas the Council may be responsible for (as outlined in paragraph 5.1(e) of the report) and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks the Police Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, for a detailed account of how her increase in precepts is being spent in the Chichester District.

Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group

Mrs C Apel, Mrs P Dignum (Chairman), Mr N Galloway and Mrs P Plant

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 – Overall the Group considered that there were good explanations for areas of the Corporate Plan where targets had not been met; some were outside the council's control, others showed great input making a difference, some needed a little more time. The Group agreed that the limited number of concerns raised from a huge range of projects showed the council's high standards and care in carrying out its Corporate Plan priorities. The Group saw no reason for further consultation as officers were able to answer all concerns satisfactorily. The Committee when considering the TFG report discussed policing matters and agreed they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the current levels of crime in the District, the impact of the new policing structure and difficulties in reporting crime to the 101 telephone line with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Inspector.

WSCC Select Committee liaison

Caroline Neville was the council's representative on the West Sussex County Council Health and Adults Social Care Select Committee (HASC). She has reported back to the committee on health issues affecting the district and local residents. The council can submit concerns regarding any health issue to the HASC for consideration via its Business Planning Group (BPG) which meets quarterly.

West Sussex Joint Scrutiny

The West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group, a group of scrutiny chairmen from the seven districts and boroughs of West Sussex who get together to suggest issues which are of common interest to two or more authorities for joint scrutiny review. The Group meets as and when the need arises and a Chairman for the Group is appointed at each meeting. No joint issues have been considered this year.