

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021-22

Introduction from the Chairman

Although I took over the Chairmanship of Overview and Scrutiny in September, this report covers meetings of the Committee starting in June 2021. I first want to thank Councillor Adrian Moss for his brilliant period as Chair. He did an amazing amount of work for this Committee and achieved many positive actions. Thanks should go to all the Committee and particularly Councillor Tracie Bangert as Vice Chair. I would like to acknowledge Carley's work who sadly has left us. We welcome Ed who is already doing great things. Finally, thanks to the Officers who help and advise us.

I would like to draw attention to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workshop held on 7 April 2022. This was a face to face meeting where members of the Committee and the officers reflected on the O and S performance during 2021 – 2022. The second item was a discussion on Overview and Scrutiny involvement in the Council's service delivery and budget review processes in 2022-2023.

In December Mrs. Rudziak, Ms. Lavender and myself as Committee Chair went to the AGM of the National Council for Scrutiny and Governance held in London. This was a very helpful meeting to see how Overview and Scrutiny is done in councils all over the country. It was very apparent how important and full of impact Scrutiny is especially where councils are running a Cabinet system. As Chair I would recommend all those who are on Scrutiny Committees to try and attend one of these meetings.

As you will see in this report, we have covered many and varied subjects. As Chair I felt some were more successful than others but that is the nature of the subject.

Now we are post Covid, there will be a great deal to do in this coming year.

Once again, thank you to members and officers for all that has been and continues to be achieved.

Clare Apel, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

The Role of Scrutiny

The Local Government Association explains that the 'principal power of a scrutiny committee is to influence the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.' In essence the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is vital as a voice of the community and must be responsive to the concerns of the public. Public confidence in politics and transparency is strengthened when people see Members scrutinising what matters to them.

Scrutiny, therefore, acts as a 'counterweight' to the powers of the executive, representing the way in which non-executive Members of the Council can hold Cabinet to account.

Whilst Scrutiny does not engage in policy formulation, it has an important role in reviewing existing Council policy and decisions. The Committee has the power to ask for a decision, taken by the Cabinet, to be reconsidered before it is implemented. This is called a 'call-in'.

The Committee has no 'formal power to compel anyone to make changes. As such, it benefits from maintaining a positive relationship with the Cabinet, increasing its 'soft' power to influence decisions and encouraging the executive to implement recommendations.

The Committee may require any Member of the Cabinet, any Chief Officer, and /or any divisional manager to attend before it to explain a decision 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.

Members Training

Cllr Apel and Mrs Rudziak attended the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Conference in December 2021.

Members and Officers found the conference extremely beneficial. It was felt that the conference served to reiterate the importance of effective scrutiny. It was emphasised that scrutiny needs to happen at the right time, before final decisions are taken, and be responsive to any public concerns which might arise. Furthermore, that Scrutiny is at its most effective when it focuses on one or two key issues in depth, maintaining a targeted work programme.

The Impact and Influence of Scrutiny

There have been no Call-ins this year.

A number of recommendations were made to Cabinet. Of the 9 recommendations, 9 were taken forward. 3 were taken on and agreed by Council.

The Committee can request a special meeting to be set up if it is felt that one topic would benefit from the in-depth scrutiny a single item meeting can offer.

Key Areas of Work and Outcomes/Achievements

Areas of focus	Outcomes-achievements
<p>Covid-19 Recovery Plan and Future Services Framework</p> <p>Diane Shepherd</p>	<p>The Committee received quarterly reports on the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and the thematic work streams;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Community & Housing Recovery;</i> - <i>Economic Recovery; Planning,</i> - <i>Health and Environmental Protection Recovery;</i> - <i>Organisational Recovery; Future Services Framework; Governance,</i> <p>The Future Services Framework determined the types and levels of services to be provided from 2022-23.</p> <p>The Committee noted the progress on the recovery action plans, the efficiency review and the Future Services Framework.</p> <p>That Committee also noted that the Housing and Community; the Planning, Health and Environmental Protection; and the Organisational Recovery Groups had completed most of their actions and as such should be discontinued.</p> <p>The Committee recommended to Cabinet the formation of an Economic Development Panel and that the Cabinet recommended to Council that the Local Council Tax Support grant of £160k for additional Hardship payments be reallocated towards the Council's budget deficit 21/22.</p> <p>The Committee expressed its thanks to all the officers at Chichester District Council for their outstanding work carried out during these unforeseen times. The Chairman also expressed thanks to all Members for their work during the pandemic.</p>
<p>Budget Amendment: March 2021 Council Minute 82</p> <p>(15th June 2021 – Minute Item 15)</p> <p>J Hotchkiss, Director Growth & Place</p>	<p>The Committee received a report on a motion tabled at March 2021 Council by Cllr Moss. The motion was titled 2021-2022 Budget amendment regeneration and economic recovery. Following discussions with Cllr Dignum and Cllr Sharp, Cllr Moss amended his original motion. The Committee received reports on each topic listed within the motion including Inward Investment and Place Branding.</p> <p>The Committee noted the amended motion presented to March 2021 Council and Council minute 82.</p> <p>The Committee noted the work to date and planned work by the Economic Development and Place Services relevant to the items listed within the motion.</p> <p>The Committee then recommended to Cabinet that a comprehensive Place Branding and District Identity Plan that includes Place, Business, the built and natural environment and Community be produced by a specialist company for the District as soon as possible in 2021-2022.</p>

<p>Communications Strategy 2021-2026</p> <p>(15th June 2021 – Minute Item 16)</p> <p>S Parker, Communications Manager</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed the draft Communications and Digital Strategy 2021 – 2026.</p>
<p>Chichester Business Improvement District Renewal</p> <p>(15th June 2021 – Minute Item 17)</p> <p>T Murphy, Divisional Manager - Place</p>	<p>Mr Derek Marsh, the Chairman of Chichester Business Improvement District (BID) and Ms Helen Marsh, the Vice-chair and Chief Executive of the Chichester BID, along with Mrs Tania Murphy, presented a report to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee were informed that in addition to essential services provided by the BID such as of the new initiatives being promoted to support local businesses;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building stronger and proactive collaborations/relationships within the city - More active in driving footfall, and keeping Chichester as a key destination city - Support entrepreneurialism and nurture new business in the city. - Support the look and feel of the public realm <p>The Committee resolved to welcome the new initiatives being introduced by BID and recommended to Cabinet that the Council continues to work in partnership with the BID and to support the ‘Renewal Business Proposal’. The Committee specifically raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The night-time economy for all residents • Encourage independent shops • Support innovative markets • Work with the University and College
<p>GP provision in Chichester</p> <p>(14th Sept. 2021 – Minute Item)</p>	<p>The Committee invited Simon Clavell-Bate, Head of Estates from West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group and Dr S Mtharu of Parklands Surgery.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mr Clavell-Bate for his attendance, and expressed her dissatisfaction that Dr Mtharu was not present.</p> <p>Mr Clavell-Bate provided members with a presentation where he highlighted the current situation, the difference between a commissioner (CCG) and a provider (GP), Estate Overview, ICS Primary Care Strategy and West Sussex summary and Strategic Planning.</p> <p>Members were invited to put their pre-submitted question to Mr Clavell-Bate.</p> <p>Key areas of discussion and concern were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The difficulties faced by many constituents in obtaining an appointment with their GP. - Surgery accessibility, in particular parking availability at Langley House and Cathedral surgeries.

	<p>-GP provision and increased need during peak seasons, particularly in The Witterings.</p> <p>Members remain concerned about many of these issues, which were discussed further at the Annual Workshop.</p>
<p>Corporate Plan 2022 – 2025 (16th Nov. 2021 - Minute Item 37)</p> <p>A Buckley, Corporate Improvement & Facilities Manager</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025 and recommended to Cabinet that the Corporate Plan success measures include safe jobs, in that the Council promote green jobs in the sectors of renewable retrofitting and the circular economy.</p>
<p>Chichester Festival Theatre Monitoring Report (16th Nov. 2021 – Minute Item 39)</p> <p>S Peyman, Divisional Manager Growth & Place Services</p>	<p>The Committee received and noted the annual report from Chichester Festival Theatre and assessed performance against the monitoring framework. Mrs Peyman introduced the report, Kathy Bourne and Georgina Rae from Chichester Festival theatre also attended the meeting to assist in answering questions.</p>
<p>Pallant House Gallery Monitoring Report (November 16 2021 – Minute Item 40)</p> <p>S Peyman, Divisional Manager Growth & Place Services</p>	<p>The Committee received and noted the annual report from Pallant House Gallery and assessed performance against the monitoring framework. Mrs Peyman gave an introduction before inviting Mr Martin to provide a more detailed report.</p>
<p>Leisure Services Performance Review (November 16 2021 – Minute Item 43)</p> <p>S Peyman, Divisional Manager Growth & Place Services</p>	<p>The Committee received and noted the annual report from Everyone Active (Sport and Leisure Management Ltd). Mrs Peyman introduced Mr Mills from Everyone Active who presented the report to Committee.</p>
<p>Chief Inspector Carter - Sussex Police (18th Jan. 2022)</p>	<p>The Chairman welcome Police Chief Inspector Carter to the meeting. CI Carter addressed the Committee on a range of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Neighbourhood policing teams -the role of PCSOs -Police numbers -Speeding and the inappropriate use of vehicles (confirming that Sussex Police had issued 8716 tickers or summonses).

	<p>CI Carter responded to Public Questions on speed limits, e-scooters and the Medicinal Cannabis Bill.</p> <p>Questions from Members raised issues relating to Police communications, Speed Watch groups and domestic abuse.</p> <p>It was noted that CI Carter was shortly to be leaving his role.</p> <p>In the subsequent Annual Workshop Members expressed a desire to invite the new Chief Inspector as a matter of urgency.</p>
<p>Future Services Framework (18th Jan 2022 – Minute Item 54) A Buckley, Corporate Improvement & Facilities Manager</p>	<p>The Committee received a Part 2 report and were invited the note the outcome and subsequent recommendations from the Future Services Framework exercise which were considered by Cabinet and then Council.</p>
<p>Planning Enforcement Ms S Archer</p>	<p>Mrs Archer presented a report on Planning Enforcement. Members were advised that the visibility and accessibility of Enforcement and a potential update to policy would form part of the upcoming Service Plan Projects.</p> <p>The Committee expressed considerable concerns regarding several ongoing Enforcement cases, relating particularly to Gypsy and Traveller Communities.</p> <p>Resolved;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee notes the operation of the planning enforcement process. 2. That the Committee notes that : (a) There are a substantial number of enforcement investigations into unauthorised developments and notes that policy I this area will shortly be reported upon and; (b) Requests that any upcoming related reviews include express focus of greater transparency in planning enforcement.
<p>Scope for East Pallant House Options Appraisal Mr J Mildred</p>	<p>Mr Mildred explained that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, working circumstances had changed significantly at the Council. Most employees now operate under a 'hybrid' system of working between home and the office.</p> <p>Mr Mildred confirmed that external reports were to be undertaken to provide the Council with a full scope of options moving forward. Members of the Committee expressed a desire to be updated at any significant milestones throughout this process, especially before referring any decisions to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Committee felt that the establishment of a new Task and Finish Group would be the best way to achieve continued Member involvement. A recommendation to Cabinet was proposed, carried and the terms of reference and Membership of the new T&FG were agreed at the subsequent Cabinet meeting on 3 May 2022.</p>

	<p>The Committee also recommended that Cabinet agree up to £20,000 from reserves to fund a third party to undertake the detailed valuation exercise to inform the options appraisal. This was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 3 May 2022.</p>
<p>Development of Barnfield Drive - Post Project Evaluation</p> <p>Mrs V McKay</p>	<p>Mrs McKay presented a report updating the Committee on the development of Council Land at Barnfield Drive including clarification of the financial details.</p> <p>The report noted that the development had seen additional business investment in the area and had contributed to the creation of local jobs.</p> <p>Members commented that the site could benefit from more landscaping, and in a written response to questions Mrs McKay confirmed that a linear parkway had formed part of the original development plans.</p>

Other Areas of Concern for OSC

The Committee plans to consider the following areas at future meetings:

- Southern Water
- Chichester Harbour
- Crime including wildlife crime
- PCSO's and Wardens
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Task and Finish Groups

Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group

At the 14 September 2021 Committee the Corporate Plan Review Task and Finish Group membership was agreed as:

Cllr Palmer (Chair)
Cllr Moss
Cllr Purnell

At the 16 November 2021 Committee the report from the Corporate Plan Task was noted. It confirmed that the Group was satisfied that the Council had been achieving satisfactory levels of performance against the targets and activities in the 2021/22 Corporate Plan mid-year progress report.

Budget Task and Finish Group

At the 16 November 2021 Committee the Budget Task and Finish Group membership was agreed as follows:

Cllr Apel (Chair)
Cllr Barrett
Cllr Potter

Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group

At the 18 January 2022 Committee the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group membership was agreed as follows:

Cllr Bangert (Chair)
Cllr Graves
Cllr Lishman
Cllr Purnell

Joint Scrutiny

Cllr Apel remains the council's representative on the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group which brings together Scrutiny Chairs across West Sussex districts and boroughs.

Cllr Bangert remains the council's representative on the West Sussex County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC). The Council can submit concerns regarding any health issue to the HASC for consideration via its Business Planning Group which meets quarterly.

Mrs. Bushby, Divisional Manager for Communities and Customer Service, has been in contact with Officers at West Sussex County Council to discuss the possibility of a joint Scrutiny meeting.