

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting - 8 October 2018

Present: M Bradford (Chairman)
P Bastiman, M Bezzant, T Egleton, M Lewis and D Saunders

Apologies for absence: D Dhillon and P Kelly

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

67. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee as a correct record.

68. PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2018-19

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the performance of council services against indicators and service objectives during Quarter 1 of 2018-19.

Members noted from the report that of the total 32 Performance Indicators (PIs), which had been reported this quarter, 29 were on target, 1 was slightly off target and 2 off target. The off target PIs related to the number of food business inspections which was because officers had had to undertake significant enforcement for poor hygiene standards at a number of premises. The number of calls to ICT helpdesk being resolved in the agreed timescales was slightly below target due to resources being pulled from the team to cope with the vworkspace rollout.

Members asked for further information on the progress of the Planning Shared Service and that a report be submitted to the next meeting. In relation to waste, Members noted that the crews had been working more slowly in the Summer due to the period of high temperature. There would be an update at the next meeting on recycling. A Member congratulated officers on the use of social media to help increase recycling.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

69. BUCKS HOME CHOICE ALLOCATION POLICY

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the proposed revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy ahead of the full consultation. Bucks Home Choice was the choice based lettings scheme that was operated jointly by Aylesbury Vale DC, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe DC for the allocation of

social housing tenancies. The Councils shared a common database and IT system for recording applications, advertising tenancies and making allocations but each Council still operated its own housing register. The last revision to the Allocations Policy was in 2014. There had also been new national legislation and guidance with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Appendix 1 of the report outlined the key changes and Appendix 2, a copy of the draft revised policy. The draft Policy would be issued for consultation and be finalised by Members in the Spring 2019.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

70. APPROVAL OF THE JOINT CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS HOUSING (AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS) STRATEGY

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the finalized version of the Chiltern and South Bucks District Council Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness 2018-2021). This Strategy needed to be reviewed and updated in view of the current housing situation across the two Districts and new statutory requirements that have come into force. Members had no comments on the final version.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

71. CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the proposed 2018-36 Chiltern and South Bucks Playing Pitch Strategy. The main aim of the Strategy was to help inform the newly emerging Local Plan and also to provide clear localised priorities to develop sustainable facilities that support increased participation. In addition it provided a robust evidence source to support local sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils and other community groups to access external funding such as that provided by Sports England.

The Leisure and Community Manager reported that there was a current shortfall in the following areas :-

- 3 X Football 3G rubber crumb pitches which would increase to an additional 5 by 2036 with the anticipated growth in population
- Whilst the adult demand was currently being met now and in the future, there was a shortfall of 23 junior 11v11 match sessions based on future population projections.
- There was a future shortfall of 11.25 match and training sessions for Rugby Union
- There was a future demand for adventure golf

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- A Member commented that this was an important resource for different organisations including clubs to apply for funding where there was a shortfall in provision and that match funding could also be given.
- A Member referred to the shortfall and commented whether there could be a change in the configuration to help meet demand e.g. if there were enough adult facilities whether this could be changed to junior facilities. The figures were based on future population figures rather than being demand led and on the number of clubs in the District as a whole. A number of sports clubs were suffering financially across the Country as their facilities had not been updated and residents were going to other clubs with better facilities. However, some clubs were thriving such as Beaconsfield Rugby Club. The Council had a role to play to help clubs that were not bringing in investment by helping them to submit bids etc and the provision of a multi-use facility could also attract increased use.
- Organisations needed to be organised in order to attract investment and it also helped to obtain charitable status.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

72. CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the proposed Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Pitch Strategy. The main aim of the Strategy was to help inform the new Local Plan. Improving access and the quality of open space provision contributed directly to improving the health and wellbeing of residents and could attract inward investment. Members had requested that there should be a further round of consultation with the Districts Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders to verify the accuracy of the Strategy.

The scope of the open space assessment criteria was detailed in the report and included areas such as amenity greenspace, allotments and community gardens. The methodology employed to reach the Strategy's conclusions included a number of elements, which were included in the report, such as the creation of a qualitative template to include key elements of design and maintenance and use of accessibility standards. The key findings were in the Appendix to the report such as the shortage of play sites and play sites needing new safety surfacing to avoid risk in the future and better signage to make open spaces more welcoming.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Open spaces should be protected from development and this Strategy played a key part in protecting open spaces.
- The Strategy played a key role in terms of open spaces being clean and well-maintained and there were a range of groups to ensure that maintenance was

of a high standards e.g.voluntary organisations played a key role in partnership with the District Council such as enforcement and environmental health.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

73. **CABINET RESPONSE TO TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Members of the Task and Finish Group had put forward recommendations to Cabinet on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Cabinet had provided a response. Work on the budget was currently being undertaken for the next financial year which would specifically address these recommendations in reports to the Policy Advisory Groups and reference would also be made in the overall report on the budget in February 2019.

Members welcomed the Cabinet response and noted that all recommendations had been accepted but emphasized that it was important to monitor their implementation. In January 2019 the Committee would review the budget proposed by the Cabinet as required under the Constitution and this would be an opportunity to assess the impact of the their recommendations. A Member asked whether Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could scrutinize and challenge Portfolio Holders during the budget process. The Director of Resources reported that the PAG meetings were open to all Members who could attend to ask questions to the Portfolio Holder. However, it would not be feasible to hold another set of meetings in order for this additional scrutiny to take place. Cabinet had been very supportive of the work carried out by the Task and Finish Group and each report to the PAG would include the action taken or not taken by the Portfolio Holder (including reasons) to address the recommendations made by the Group in order to be transparent. A table could be produced of the overall changes as a result of the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2019 as required under the Constitution.

74. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND RIPA ANNUAL REPORT**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which provided an update on the public engagement with the FOI Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulations, the Transparency Code of Practice , the INSPIRE Regualations, RIPA, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Members noted that the number of FOI requests remained static from the year before. The service areas that received the most FOI requests were Business Support and Healthy Communities. The majority of requests were for commercial information that would be useful for businesses and also in relation to housing. There was also a number of requests from the media and researchers. In terms of Subject Access

Requests there had been very few submitted, however they could be time consuming. In the first five months there had been six SAR requests and some of these related to enforcement actions. RIPA related to surveillance activities and training had been given to appropriate staff as required by the legislation.

During discussion a Member queried why SBDC had increased by 1.83% and CDC had decreased by 18.94%. The Director of Resources reported that it was not always obvious why statistics changed. However, CDC had previously received a number of requests relating to HS2 which had reduced. A Member asked a question in relation to surveillance and noted that information could be picked up through data matching which could show signs of fraud and therefore surveillance was not cost effective, as it could be time consuming and it was important to have enough evidence to justify a prosecution.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

75. SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report giving some analysis of sickness absence with the Council. The Human Resources Manager reported that sickness absence had fallen and that in April, May, June and July the average number of days absent per employee across the two Councils was 2.76 in April and 2.10 in July for short term absence. For long term absence the average was 4 days. In 2017/18 the sickness absence performance indicator was a maximum of 10 days on average per employee a year.

A national survey dated May 2018 reported that on average public sector employees had 8.5 days of absence in 2017 and the same in 2016, whereas absence rates were considerably lower in the private sector showing an average of 5.6 days per employee. In 2017/18 Wycombe District Council was 6.81 on average a year per employee and Aylesbury Vale DC were currently producing their figures.

The HR Manager reported that the reduced sickness figures could be due to a number of issues such as:-

- Supporting Line Managers in monitoring absence and taking the appropriate action to follow the Sickness Absence Policy
- Running workshops on 'Promoting a Positive Attendance Culture'
- Providing regular reports to Management Team
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing including the Mental Health Awareness Week and the introduction of Wellness Action Plans and the setting up of the Health and Wellbeing Forum
- A Workshop on Mental Wellness which was run by MIND

During discussion Members discussed the following points:-

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- A Member asked if it was possible to split the sickness figures between physical and mental health. The HR Manager reported that this would be easier for long term sickness but more difficult for short term sickness, which usually tended to be physical. Overall the HR Manager considered that there was 70% physical illness and 30% mental health illness with respect to long term absence at the current time.
- There was a slow rise in mental health illness and staff would be referred to Occupational Health to obtain a medical opinion early on and to provide advice and support. Staff did not have to disclose everything but were encouraged to do so. Poor mental health could be triggered by a number of issues. The HR Manager reported that it was important to continue to have conversations with staff while they were on sick leave and to have a return to work meeting to continue to make them feel valued.
- The investment in the Middle Manager Course was successful providing tools for Managers to have difficult conversations with staff and also to have confidence in their role.
- There could be an increase in sickness during the winter months, but staff were encouraged to have flu vaccinations. There had also been sleep workshops to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Initiatives had been put forward to help health and wellbeing which had not used a lot of resources such as the use of the Richmond Fellowship and promoting good practice such as walking meetings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

76. **BUCKS HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting(s) of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee held on 24 July 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee be noted.

77. **BUCKS CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting(s) of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee held on 10 July 2018.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee be noted.

78. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

There were no questions.

79. **WORK PROGRAMME**

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The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme with the additional items relating to the Planning Shared Service and recycling updates.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be agreed.

The meeting terminated at 7.15 pm