

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17 January 2017**

Present:

Councillor S.C. Mooney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

R.O. Barratt	Q.R. Edgington	O. Rybinski
S. Capes	M.P.C. Francis	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
S.M. Doran	N. Islam	B.B. Spoor

Apologies: Councillors C.A. Davis, K. Flurry and A.L. Griffiths

296/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

297/16 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

298/16 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No Cabinet decisions had been called in for review.

299/16 Budget Issues 2017/18 to 2018/19

The Chief Finance Officer, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Howard Williams, gave a presentation (attached to these minutes) outlining the context of the budget for 2017/18 and the challenges of delivering a sustainable financial future due to both the known demands and pressures on the budget and those that were difficult to forecast.

The presentation covered the following issues:

Context for Budget 2017/18:

- Funding update - 4 year Revenue Support Grant settlement from government; the reduction in which was the key underlying driver for the Council's Towards a Sustainable Future programme.
- New Homes Bonus funding reductions
- Business rates
- Pressures and risk including staffing, assets, housing, recycling,
- Impact upon of us of Surrey County Council's financial position

- Impact of BP deal - updated projections
- Continuing strong treasury management performance

Ongoing Strategies to address future challenges

- Commercial asset investment strategy
- Housing strategies
- Balanced Budget 2017-18
- Investment in staff, assets and housing

The Chief Finance Officer and Cllr Williams answered members' questions.

Resolved to note the budget issues presentation for 2017/18 to 2018/19.

300/16 Treasury Management half-yearly report

The Committee received the Treasury Management half-yearly report on treasury performance for the first six months of the financial year to the end of September 2016. The Council had invested and borrowed substantial sums of money and was therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The report covered the council's treasury activity and the associated monitoring and control of risks.

The Chief Finance Officer highlighted the performance of the Council's fund investments which totalled £43.29m as at 30/9/16 including short term cash flow funds and had generated an average return of 2.11% in the first six months of 2016/17. The use of pooled investment funds, which as at 30/9/16 had generated a 4.31% return, compared to the target of 4%, within the portfolio was fundamental to the continued positive performance and should help maintain overall investment returns into the future.

Resolved to note the treasury position achieved during the first six months of 2016/17 and the financial environment in global markets.

301/16 Corporate Project Management progress report

The Committee received an update report from the Group Head for Commissioning and Transformation on progress with the Council's key projects and programmes. The report highlighted the work of the corporate project team and how it was evolving to ensure it met the needs of the new structure. She drew members' attention to the Projects dashboard which detailed the progress being made on flagship projects and advised that the format of this document was being revised to make it more readable and useful for the future.

Resolved to note the progress being made with Corporate Projects and the work of the Corporate Project Team.

302/16 Updates from Task Groups

The Committee received updates from the lead councillors on the work of the following Task Groups:

Communications

Councillor Capes reminded members that the objective of the Task Group was to understand the tools available to councillors to find the information they needed to help their constituents, and develop a process whereby councillors were able to quickly access information on key topics.

She explained that a survey had been undertaken to inform the Task Group's work and the results indicated that councillors needed more understanding of the tools available to them, particularly online, to quickly access relevant information. At its next meeting in February 2017, the Task Group would discuss producing a one page information leaflet including all the tools available to councillors and providing an officer contact.

Parks

Councillor Francis reminded the Committee that the Task Group was looking at how they could help people wanting to organise events in open spaces. He advised that there was now a simple process in place and the potential for some income. At future meetings the Task Group planned to consider charges in Parks car parks, local conveniences and a Staines-upon-Thames regatta.

Taxis

Councillor Smith-Ainsley reminded councillors of the objectives of the Task Group, which were:

- to consult with representatives of the taxi trade on their desired locations for taxi ranks; and
- to formulate recommendations for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to put to Licensing Committee

Councillor Smith-Ainsley advised that three taxi drivers had attended the meeting of the Task Group and gave their comments on preferred rank locations.

The Task Group recommended that:

1. the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks officers to progress the matters raised by taxi drivers in relation to amendments to, and new, rank locations and after due process report their findings to the Licensing Committee for approval; and
2. the Task Group continues to meet as and when required to monitor progress of the above matter.

Resolved:

1. to note the updates from the Task Groups for Communications, Parks and Taxis and
2. to ask officers to progress the matters raised by taxi drivers in relation to amendments to, and new, rank locations and after due process report their findings to the Licensing Committee for approval; and
3. that the Taxi Task Group continues to meet as and when required to monitor progress of the above matter.

303/16 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

304/16 Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of the Municipal year.

Resolved to note the work programme for the remainder of 2016/17.