

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 February 2020

Present: Councillor Grimston (Chair)
Councillors Allen-Williamson, Martins, Mauthoor, Parker, Shah,
Stiff and Turmaine

Also present: Councillor Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Resources and
Customer Services)

Officers: Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Head of Revenues and Benefits
Senior Democratic Services Officer

71 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Shah replaced Councillor Dhindsa.

Apologies were received from Councillor Saffery.

72 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

73 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2019 were submitted and signed.

74 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

The scrutiny committee noted the minutes of the Finance Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2020 and of the Health Services for the Deaf Task Group on 21 January 2020.

75 **End of Q3 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators**

The scrutiny committee received the report of the Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications setting out the results for the key performance indicators at the end of Quarter 3 2019/20. Members reviewed the indicators,

particularly those which were below target, noting the explanations and clarifications provided.

There followed a short discussion about the number of rough sleepers within the authority area. Scrutiny members queried the process of providing someone with accommodation and the practicalities of furnishing that accommodation, including the storage and redistribution of donated household goods by the New Hope Trust. The Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications agreed to research this further and provide members with an overview of the process.

In a brief review of the performance targets for ICT, it was explained that the Group Head of Transformation would be proposing some changes to the indicators for this service.

RESOLVED –

that the key performance indicator results for Quarter 3 2019/20 be noted.

Action: Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications

76

Revenues and Benefits Update

The committee received a presentation by the Head of Revenues and Benefits. This provided an update on processing and collection rates for the service together with a review of changes brought in as part of the Watford 2020 transformation programme. Copies of the presentation had been sent to the committee in advance of the meeting.

During discussions, members considered the authority's council tax reduction scheme which provided means tested support for residents on very low incomes. This scheme was reviewed regularly and scrutiny members questioned whether it would be timely for a further review to be undertaken, possibly by a task and finish group. In order to inform members' understanding, the Head of Revenues and Benefits agreed to provide a comparison of similar schemes offered in other Hertfordshire authorities.

There followed a short discussion about the debt recovery process used when residents fell into arrears with their council tax payments. Scrutiny members welcomed the council's emphasis on interaction and engagement rather than on enforcement, although it was accepted that enforcement action would sometimes be needed. Members requested a breakdown of the number of households by ward which had been referred to an enforcement agency in the past year.

RESOLVED –

that the presentation be noted.

Action: Head of Revenues and Benefits

77 Executive Decision Progress Report

The scrutiny committee received the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress Report.

RESOLVED –

that the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

78 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

It was noted that Councillor Grimston, the Council's appointed representative to the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, had circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members a draft report of the recent work of the Herts Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair commented that she was monitoring closely plans for the future of Mount Vernon Hospital and would report any developments to scrutiny members.

79 Work Programme

The scrutiny committee received the updated draft of its work programme incorporating the suggestions from the previous meeting. With a view to the 2020/21 work programme, members were asked to refer any proposals for future scrutiny review to the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED –

that the work programme be noted.

80 Dates of Next Meetings

- 27 February 2020
- 19 March 2020

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.05 pm