

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 June 2024

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors K Clarke-Taylor, P Hill, A Khan, P Kloss, C Newstead,
T Osborn and R Short

Officers: Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy
Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead
Senior Democratic Services Officer

1 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There was one change of membership for this meeting; Councillor Clarke-Taylor replaced Councillor Duduta.

Apologies had also been received from Councillor Rodrigues, Portfolio Holder.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024 were submitted and signed.

4 **Performance and Progress Report - Q4 2023/24**

The committee received a report of the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services, the Delivery Support Lead and the Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead. The Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead introduced the report.

The committee were invited to discuss the report. During the course of the discussion, the following key points were made:

- The reasons behind the increase in the levels of graffiti and the timescales for removal; this was noted as an action to report back.
- Beryl Bikes were sometimes left outside of the stands which was untidy. More stands did not include physical infrastructure and the bike locations were tracked via GPS. The associated charges for leaving bikes outside of the stands should be

reviewed. It was noted that an item could be considered for the work programme to include the costs of the contract and the KPIs.

- The level of parking penalty charges and the opportunities for residents to appeal. Some residents did not have smartphones and struggled with the electronic system; paper alternatives should be easily accessible.
- The process for awarding the contract to the new switchboard provider had been a competitive tender process. The contract had been ending and the new contract would incorporate new functionality including an AI webchat.
- There had been a comprehensive review of the key performance indicators last year in which Overview and Scrutiny Committee were consulted. The views of the scrutiny committee throughout the year were taken into account as indicators were reviewed. Maintaining a consistent approach allowed for measuring performance over a longer period.
- There had been an increase in throughput at Woodside and a decrease at Central leisure centre; officers undertook to circulate further explanations for these trends.
- The committee were interested in how success in Watford's culture could be measured and what metrics could be useful to that end. A new Cultural Strategy was planned for 2025 and would include a clear delivery plan and framework for measuring success.
- Members were interested in understanding the performance of the Shopper Bus initiative and what measures were included in the contract.
- There were two indicators around temporary accommodation. The performance had missed the target by a significant margin. This was an issue of concern for councils across the country and the committee asked for additional commentary on the context for the results.
- Child poverty was an area of concern to be picked up in the 2024/25 work programme.

Resolved –

that that Overview and Scrutiny note the progress updates within this report relating to:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24 (Appendix A)
- the external key performance indicator results for Quarter 4 of 2023/24 (Appendix B)
- the council's key corporate strategies (Appendix C)

5 **Statutory Scrutiny Guidance**

The committee received a report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer. The officer introduced the report and set out the areas identified for further exploration. There was agreement that a further discussion with the Chair of the Audit Committee would be valuable.

Resolved –

1. that Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the update.
2. that Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the following proposed actions arising following the review of the guidance:
 - To explore ways to raise the profile of scrutiny internally and for residents.
 - To consider how conflicts of interest in a scrutiny context are managed as part of any future review of the constitution.
 - To remind scrutiny members of the option to co-opt members or draw on technical advisors for scrutiny reviews on a case-by-case basis.
 - For scrutiny to consider the outcomes of Audit Committee discussions around risk to inform their work programming.

6 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2024-25 and consider whether any further information was required.

It was noted that the report on the recycling service would go to Cabinet in July.

Resolved –

that the current 2024/25 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

7 **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

The committee noted that Councillor Martins was now the representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee. Updates would be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8 **Work Programme**

Members were invited to review Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for 2024/25.

Introducing the item, the Chair noted that the work programme provided an outline, but it was for the members to direct the focus of the committee's investigations and establish the outcomes they wished to achieve. She invited further suggestions in the meeting and by email.

The following items were suggested for the work programme:

- Artificial intelligence.
- Child poverty
- River health for the Colne and the Gade
- Beryl Bikes

- Temporary accommodation
- Carpark maintenance by partners.

Resolved –

that the Chair work with officers to incorporate members' suggestions into the 2024/25 work programme.

9 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 17 July. A further meeting was scheduled for Thursday 25 July for call-in only.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.05 pm
and finished at 8.00 pm