

COUNCIL

21 APRIL 2022

REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Author: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees since the last report to Council on 20 January 2022.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. The Council's Constitution provides for the activities of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees to be reported to Council meetings. The following is a high-level summary of business conducted. For further detail please refer to the minutes of each Committee which are published on the Council's website using the web links listed under background papers.

2. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2022

2.1. Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets 2022/23

Outcome:

The Committee recommended to the Cabinet:

- a) A proposed social rent increase of 3.5% (which is below the allowed CPI of 3.1 plus 1%) for the social rent housing stock as set out in Appendix A (based on 52 collection weeks) with effect from 04 April 2022.
- b) A proposed affordable rent increase of 3.5% (which is below the allowed CPI of 3.1 plus 1%) for the affordable rent properties as set out in Appendix B (based on 52 collection weeks) with effect from 04 April 2022.
- c) A proposed rent increase of 5% to be applied to all garage tenure types with effect from 04 April 2022 as stated in section 4.
- d) That the service charges increases/decreases as set out in Appendix C of the report for 2022/23 be approved.

- e) That to allow the service charges cap of 15%, or 10 pence, whichever is the greater.
- f) That the revenue budget for the HRA service for 2022/23 as per Appendix D be approved.
- g) That the proposed new budget of £8.2m (as set out in section 8.5.3 & 8.5.4) and a virement of £1.3m from phase 4 budget be approved for Phase 5 new build programme.
- h) That the provision for the repayment of debt based on annuity-based payment of £0.427m, on the HRA's outstanding debt for 2022/23 be approved.
- i) That Members approve the revised 30-year HRA Business Plan model as attached at Appendix E.

2.2. Draft Capital and Revenue Budgets 2022/23

Outcome:

- a) The Committee noted that Cabinet has instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2022/23 and beyond.
- b) The Committee commented on the proposals outlined in the draft capital and revenue budgets in so far as they relate to the services within the remit of this committee. It considered the comments from the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out in Appendix 5, and forwards them to Cabinet, contributing to the overall comments that the Committee feeds back to Cabinet on behalf of the other O&S Committees.

2.3. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023.

Outcome:

- a) The Committee commented on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 (Appendix 5) for Cabinet's consideration on 8 February 2022 when it will be asked to recommend the scheme to Council for adoption on 24 February 2022 based on the twelve proposed changes to the existing scheme.
- b) The Committee commented on the proposal to cease the risk-based verification policy from 1 April 2022 (paragraphs 1.5 and 2.1.8) which will be for Cabinet's consideration on 8 February 2022.
- c) Members requested that a briefing note and presentation be provided to assist their understanding of the new Council Tax Reduction scheme, including Council Tax Discretionary Relief.

2.4. Council Strategy and Council Plan Refresh 2022 – 2023

Outcome:

Members commented on the refreshed Council Strategy as shown in Appendix 1, and on the refreshed Council Plan measures as shown in Appendix 2.

2.5. Risk Strategy Annual Review

Outcome:

- a) The Committee noted and commented on the 2022/23 Risk Strategy at Appendix 1 setting out the Council's approach to risk management.
- b) The Committee requested an update on arrangements for a Member briefing on Emergency Planning.

2.6. Work Programme

The Committee:

- a) agreed the Committee's work programme at Appendix 1 of the report;
- b) noted the work programmes of the other overview and scrutiny committees at Appendix 2 of the report;
- c) agreed that there be further discussion between Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Opposition Spokespersons on measures for future overview and scrutiny committee meetings;
- d) noted the Director of Public Health's advice in relation to undertaking a Task Group on GP appointments and access to services at the present time;
- e) agreed the schedule for the remaining Task Groups as: 1. GP appointments and access to services; 2. physical activity; 3. town centres; and 4. support for carers (as a themed meeting); and
- f) agreed that the Local Plan be considered by each of the overview and scrutiny committees at the appropriate time.

3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 March 2022

3.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report

3.2. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member)

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report.

3.3. Medway Youth Justice Plan 2022-24

Outcome:

1. The Committee noted the report.
2. The Committee recommended the Cabinet to recommend Full Council to approve the Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2022 – 2024 attached at Appendix 1 to the report, including its priorities and themes and details of its consultation process (attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the Strategic Plan).

3.4. Children's Service Improvement Update

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report.

3.5. Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Risk Register Quarter 3 2021/22

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report.

3.6. Work Programme

Outcome:

1. The Committee agreed the work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. The Committee agreed that a paper be brought to a future meeting on workforce and recruitment.

4. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
10 March 2022

4.1 Healthy Pregnancy in Medway

Outcome:

The Committee noted the offer families have to support them to have a healthy pregnancy and asked that an article on the support available be included in Medway Matters.

4.2. South East Coast Ambulance Service Update

Outcome:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

4.3. Medway Community Healthcare Service Briefing

Outcome:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

4.4. Kent and Medway Neurodevelopmental Adult Pathway Update (Adult
Autism/ADHD)

Outcome:

The Committee agree to note the report.

4.5. “Bridging the Digital Gap – Improving Health Outcomes Through Digital
Innovation” Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2020-2021

Outcome:

The Committee agreed to:

a) note the comments of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and;

b) note the Annual Public Health Report 2020/21.

4.6. Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Risk Register Quarter 3
2021/2022

Outcome:

The Committee noted the Quarter 3 2021/22 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council’s priorities.

4.7. Work Programme

Outcome:

The Committee agreed to:

- a) approve the proposed work programme, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and;
- b) recommend that the Business Support O&S Committee re-instates Physical Activity as the next Task Group, followed by GP appointments and access to services, for the reasons set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

5. Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 March 2022

5.1. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships

Outcome:

The Committee:

- a) Noted the report and thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the meeting and answering questions.
- b) Requested that a briefing note be provided to the Committee in relation to the City Estate / Berwick Way slip road delivery.
- c) Noted that the Portfolio Holder would investigate reinstating access to the pathway linking 41 Canal Road to Strood Pier.
- d) Requested that it be arranged for Members of the Committee to visit the former Civic Centre site in Strood to look at the flood defence wall.
- e) Requested that more detail, including project outcomes, be provided in future Portfolio Holder reports.

5.2. Scrutiny of South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report and commented on the presentation at the meeting delivered by the Chief Executive Officer of SELEP.

5.3. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Business Management

Outcome:

The Committee:

- a) Noted the report and thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the meeting and answering questions.
- b) Expressed its thanks to various Council teams, particularly the bereavement team for their work in response to the challenges they had faced due to Covid and to those involved in the response to recent flooding in Canal Road, Strood.
- c) Requested that the following information be included in the next Portfolio Holder report to the Committee:
 - i) Details of inspection visits to recycling street bin sites.
 - ii) Details of the role of Waste Wardens and the areas they cover.
 - iii) Details of how dog fouling had been tackled across Medway.
 - iv) Details of whose responsibility it is to refer injuries caused by dogs to the Police.
- d) Requested that the Dog Warden service emphasise to dog owners the requirement for dogs to have an ID tag in addition to a harness.

5.4. Medway 2037 Strategy Refresh

Outcome:

The Committee noted the report and accompanying summaries of the strategy documents and commented on the proposed suite of Strategies and presentation delivered by SQW.

5.5. Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Risk Register Review Quarter 3 2021/22

Outcome:

The Committee considered the Q3 2021/22 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities and:

- a) Requested that the green status of the net additional homes provided target (NI154) be checked as the report stated that there had been 1,082 completions in 2020/21 against a target of 1,586.
- b) Requested that strategic risks be given greater prominence in future performance monitoring reports.

- c) Requested that an update on the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) be provided to the Committee.
- d) Requested that the Assistant Director, Regeneration provide an update to Councillors Etheridge, Browne and Curry in relation to concerns raised about the potential development of greenfield sites.

5.6. Petitions

Outcome:

The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer action in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

5.7. Work Programme

Outcome:

The Committee:

- a) Noted the current work programme.
- b) Agreed that the report on the Four Elms Hill Air Quality Management Area, currently listed on the Work Programme for the June 2022 meeting, instead be considered at the August 2022 meeting, subject to a briefing note on progress being provided to the Committee in the interim.
- c) Agreed that the Medway Investment Plan be added to the Committee Work Programme for consideration at a meeting later in the year.
- d) Agreed that Councillor Osborne's Member's item on sewage discharges be included on the Committee agenda for June.

6. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 31 March 2022

- 6.1. The following reports were considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31 March 2022 and are listed here to enable the Council to discuss any issues arising at this meeting as the minutes are not yet available:
- 6.2. Medway Norse Update
- 6.3. Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Risk Register Quarter 3 2021/22
- 6.4. Capital Budget Monitoring Report Round 3 2021/22
- 6.5. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 Round 3

- 6.6. Annual Review of the Council's Petitions Scheme
- 6.7. Work programme
- 7. Recommendation
- 7.1. It is recommended that Council notes the report in relation to Overview and Scrutiny activity.

Contact for further details

Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Telephone: 01634 332509 Email: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

None

Background papers

[Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2022](https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=5123&Ver=4)
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=5123&Ver=4>

[Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 March 2022](https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=378&MId=5136&Ver=4)
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=378&MId=5136&Ver=4>

[Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 March 2022](https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=5140&Ver=4)
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=5140&Ver=4>

[Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 March 2022](https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=437&MId=5145&Ver=4)
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=437&MId=5145&Ver=4>

[Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 31 March 2022](https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=5147&Ver=4)
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=5147&Ver=4>