

Cabinet 30/5/17 - Comments from Overview & Scrutiny Panels

Part I

Corporate Services

Financial Update

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the Cabinet Financial Update report and fully endorsed the recommendations, including the additional recommendation circulated at the meeting regarding the appointments of the Braywick Leisure Centre Project Design Team. The Panel requested additional information relating to the revision to the Housing Capital Programme, the savings from community protection and enforcement services and why the approved estimate is larger than the budget originally set. In response to questions it was reported that the accounts complied currently with all the current legislation requirements, there were no outstanding inspections from any government agency and there were no outstanding debt or legal costs that were not yet accounted for.

Council Performance Management Framework Quarter 4

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the Cabinet Council Performance Report and fully endorsed the recommendations.

There was disagreement with paragraph 8.2 as Panel Members and the Chairman felt that it was for the Panel itself to decide which Lead Members they wished to invite to attend Panel meetings to explain their performance against indicators within the report. The Panel's role was to hold Cabinet to account and scrutinise Cabinet reports as required; Cllr McWilliams explained that the purpose of the paragraph was to reduce duplication of effort as currently Lead Members and officers were attending multiple scrutiny Panels to discuss the same topics. Cllr McWilliams felt that it was more appropriate for Lead Members to explain performance to the appropriate Panel, for example the Lead Member of Children's Services to explain performance to the Children's Services O&S Panel. The Panel felt that as they had an overarching role they would reserve the right to call any Lead Member to account. Cllr McWilliams agreed to review the guidelines.

The Chairman stated while he was Chairman he could call any paper he required to make sure he was carrying out his role to his best ability and for residents. The Cabinet Members should be able to be summoned by overview and scrutiny panels otherwise there is no reason for their existence.

The Panel felt that an additional action should be added to the remedial action for CCS31 Planning Appeals Lost requesting more training for Members sitting on Planning Panels and that the Member that proposes the motion to go against officer recommendations works with the appropriate officers on any appeal and attends appeal hearings.

With regards to the Planning Department's performance the Panel requested additional information on the recruitment and retention of planning officers over the past three years, how this compared to other authorities and the number of planning officers working for RBWM.

Big concern was raised about indicators OCS63a and b – calls answered less than one minute. The Panel were concerned about the drop in performance and the service being offered to residents. It was recommended that more could be done to incentivise the use of the digital platform. The Panel were very concerned at the 7000 calls been dropped in a month. The Panel wanted a quick resolution to the problem. The Panel requested a report at their next meeting to see if figures had improved.

There were a number of indicators with the wrong RAG status and it was recommended that the report be reviewed and amended before Cabinet, for example ACH20 was more the 10% off target and thus should not be reporting as Amber. The same applied for OCS69 and OCS66.

With regards to fly tipping the Chairman recommended that the Police should be encouraged to use their powers to ask drivers to produce their waste transfer licence. There should be joint action by the Police and trading standards to do spot checks on vehicles carrying waste,

The Chairman mentioned that there were failing indicators within the Children's and Adults Directorate and asked the Managing Director if any children or adults were at risk. It was reported that no children or adults were at risk.

The Chairman thanked Cllr D Wilson for attending the meeting to discuss his portfolio's indicators and for Cllr Carrol for sending in a written response.

Culture & Communities O&S Panel

Council Performance Management Framework Quarter 4

The Panel thanks officers and Lead Members for a clear performance management report.

In comparing to the previous report, it is possible to identify the significant progress that has been made against the identified priorities.

It was particularly noted that during a period of change, the progress was worthy of note.

Planning and Housing

Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend to Cabinet the report be noted and:

- i) Approved the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Appendix 1).
- ii) Approved that community involvement on the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan and associated supporting documents be authorised.
- iii) Delegated authority to the Head of Planning to make any minor amendments necessary to the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning prior to community involvement.

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel commented that too many gravel extraction sites were being allowed to fill up with water which was a waste of the land. The Panel stated that the land should be returned to its proper use.

Response to Housing White Paper

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel by majority vote (Councillors Kellaway, Alexander, Hilton & Walters voted for & Councillor Beer voted against) agreed to recommend that Cabinet noted the report and:

- i) Strongly endorsed the RBWM submitted response to the Housing White Paper consultation which was detailed in Appendix A.

Councillor Beer on behalf of the Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel commented that he was disgusted that this had not come before the Panel before it had been agreed and moved forward. Councillor Hilton also stated that Duty to Cooperate was no substitute for a Regional Plan / Strategy which Councillors Walters and Beer agreed with and endorsed.

Empty Homes Strategy

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend that Cabinet noted the report and:

- i) Approved the action plan of bringing back empty homes into use for the affordable housing portfolio.

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel commented that there were two conflicting figures in the report of 25 and 40 and requested that this be adjusted accordingly.

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel requested that they be given regular updates every 3, 6, 9 months.

Adult Services and Health

ASC Investment

The recommendations were unanimously agreed with no amendments.