

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022 / 23

1.0 Councillor M W Helm was elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year, with Councillor P L Spenceley elected as Vice-Chairman. Those two Councillors together with Councillors V J Bell and B B Heubner were appointed to serve on the Committee's Working Group.

2.0 Over the past year the Committee has dealt with the following matters:

Subject	Status / Learning outcomes and actions	Update
Parks Team Culture and Health and Safety Concerns. (Councillor V J Bell).	As at January 2022 no further scrutiny required at this stage and on the basis of information submitted to be kept under review by the Working Group and a further report submitted in six months. Watching brief to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data around staff satisfaction • What opportunities staff are given for feedback. 	The Working Group received an update report in August 2022 and agreed that the issues having been highlighted had largely been resolved.
Five-year land supply – lack of resilience and robustness of process. (Councillor W Stamp).	Committee added this to its scrutiny workplan in March 2022, and received a detailed report in July 2022 addressing the following issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) A clearer understanding of what has led to the present position, and why this issue was not identified and reported earlier; ii) What is proposed to resolve the present difficulty, and, iii) What impact this has on the Local Development Plan and the impending Review. iv) Details of the strategic site planning applications coming forward and the predicted time for reaching the housing plan. It was agreed to recommend that the Council pauses the current review methodology of the LDP, all Members be invited to an extraordinary meeting of the Council to consider options with regard to the methodology used and considers a partial	The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation and set up a Working Group to deal with this.

Subject	Status / Learning outcomes and actions	Update
	review of the LDP as required rather than a full change to the Council's current Strategy.	
<p>Notice of Motion relating to a successful planning appeal and award of costs against the Council – site at Burnham-on-Crouch (Councillor A S Fluker)</p> <p>Planning decision-making</p>	<p>This motion having been referred by the Council was accepted by the Committee at its meeting in July 2022 and added to its scrutiny workplan.</p> <p>Added to this scrutiny item is the reference from the July 2022 meeting of the Council. This arose from another appeal decision and an award of costs in relation to site at Burnham on Crouch. The Council having emphasised the need for more objective and evidence-based decision-making in the future.</p> <p>Following an interim report in October 2022 the Committee considered a report from its Working Group in January 2023 identifying a range of measures to help improve planning decision making. The Committee recommended to the Council the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and refresh of the Planning Appeals Protocol; • Views and conclusions on Member Training – limited to concentrating on bespoke and specialised training; • Review and improvement of Officer Reports 	<p>The Council at its meeting in February 2023 accepted the Committee's recommendation.</p>
<p>Planning Enforcement – performance and processes</p>	<p>Scrutiny requests had previously been raised by Councillors Bassenger and Swain, and also former</p>	

Subject	Status / Learning outcomes and actions	Update
	<p>Councillor Jarvis. The matter had been the subject of a 'watching brief', but in October the Committee sought a report providing full information on performance and processes. An interim report was considered at the January 2023 when it was decided to seek further information on the following detailed issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation of enforcement cases • Baseline study/pathways for specific categories of enforcement processes • Protocols for Member involvement in enforcement processes • Arrangements for after-office hours work to assist with investigating and monitoring enforcement cases • Arrangements for the closing of enforcement cases • Concept of Compliance Officers for the checking of planning conditions particularly on new residential developments, new builds and extensions etc. <p>At the March meeting of the Committee a further report on progress was received and it was agreed that this should be added to the scrutiny workplan, with a focus on policy review, staffing resource and other ongoing performance review issues.</p>	
Staff Exit Questionnaires	<p>Reference from Performance Governance and Audit Committee in September 2022 that the Committee reviews the outcomes from these.</p> <p>The Committee in October 2022 agreed to add this to its scrutiny workplan and further detail behind high level data on responses will be brought to the</p>	

APPENDIX 1

Subject	Status / Learning outcomes and actions	Update
	Committee in due course.	
Cyber Security Update	<p>Reference from Performance, Governance and Audit Committee in September 2022 that the Committee reviews the audit and technical reports on this matter.</p> <p>The Committee in October 2022 agreed to add this to its scrutiny workplan. At its March 2023 meeting, it agreed to accept by way of reassurance the update on the various actions undertaken, and to further review the item in the light of the pending Internal Audit reports.</p>	
Notice of Motion by Councillor A S Fluker on a potential Councillor Conduct Issue	<p>Referred by the Council in November 2022 to review and report</p> <p>The Committee in January 2023 formally received the reference from the Council and also a draft response to the motion from its Working Group. The Committee agreed that the matters raised in the motion did not require to be added to the Committee's scrutiny workplan.</p>	The Council at its meeting in February 2023 accepted the Committee's response.
Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults – corporate risk update	<p>Reference from Performance, Governance and Audit Committee in January 2023 for review to ensure that the Council is supporting this area of work appropriately together with the Officers undertaking the actual work.</p> <p>At its March 2023 meeting the Committee received this reference and agreed to add the item to its scrutiny workplan. In the light of information received as to work in progress the Committee agreed to review the matter before the end of September 2023.</p>	