

SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

4 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

Committee Members Present Councillor Murray (Chair)
Councillor Ferguson
Councillor Harrison
Councillor Hussain
Councillor Rasab
Councillor Samra
Councillor M. Statham

Officers Present Vicky Buckley – Head of Finance
Helen Dudson – Corporate Assurance Manager
Elise Hopkins – System Leader (Money, Home, Job)
Neil Hollyhead – Senior Housing Officer
Craig Goodall – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Portfolio Holders Councillor Bird - Leader
Councillor Chatta – Personnel and Business Support
Councillor Martin – Adult Social Care
Councillor Perry – Community, Leisure and Culture
Councillor Towe – Education and Skills

203/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Nawaz and Jeavons

204/20 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

205/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declaration of interests.

206/20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 (AS AMENDED)

There were no items in private session.

207/20 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

208/20 REVENUE BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 TO 2022/23

The Committee considered the draft capital programme as reported to Cabinet on 18 December 2019.

The Head of Finance highlighted the draft capital programme noting investment being funded from the councils own resources and externally funded schemes.

A Member asked a question about the savings that were to be delivered in the budget through the Walsall Proud Programme (WPP). The Leader explained that £8m of revenue savings were included for 2020/21 with a further £20m of savings required in 2021/22. These savings were going to be delivered by new ways of working. Examples were given of increasing the use of digital methods, new ways of working in Planning and the success of the Perform+ coaching programme in Money, Home, Job.

Resolved:

That the draft capital programme 2020/21 be noted.

209/20 CORPORATE PLAN 2018-21 REFRESH

The Committee considered the refreshed Corporate Plan 2018-21 (the Plan).

The Corporate Assurance Manager informed the Committee that a handful of the outcomes in the Plan had been updated by Cabinet in September 2019. The vision and priorities remained the same. The Plan would be considered for approval by Council on 27 February 2020.

Resolved:

That the refreshed Corporate Plan 2018-21 be noted.

210/20 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 2019-20

The Corporate Assurance Manager reported on performance against delivery of the outcomes contained in the Plan.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

211/20 EU EXIT PREPARDNESS

The Committee considered the Councils preparation for the UK leaving the European Union (EU) which took place on 31 January 2020.

The Portfolio Holder (Communities, Leisure and Culture) provided an overview of how the Council had planned and prepared for EU exit. He explained that during the one year transition period it would be 'business as usual'. Work was taking place to support EU nationals living in the borough who were a valued part of the local community.

The Committee asked a series of questions which are summarised below:

- There were 12,000 EU nationals living in the borough. Work was taking place through Walsall for All to engage local EU nationals to engage them to register for settled status. It was agreed to provide Members with an indication of how many EU nationals living in the borough had registered for settled status.
- £157,000 of funding received from central government had been pooled with the West Midlands Combined Authority. This was to co-ordinate issues that required a regional response such as food distribution and staff in the adult social care sector.

Resolved:

That the Committee be informed how many EU nationals living in the borough had sought settled status in the UK.

212/20 DRAFT WALSALL HOUSING STRATEGY 2020 TO 2025

The Committee considered the draft Housing Strategy (the Strategy).

The Senior Housing Officer explained the rationale for the Strategy and highlighted the draft priorities to Members.

The Committee discussed numerous issues related to housing including reducing carbon footprints through sustainable developments including vehicle charging points.

Members reported challenges engaging with Walsall Housing Group on behalf of residents. A discussion took place on housing in the private rented sector and challenges with enforcement to improve housing quality. A request was made to understand how many penalty notices had been issued against landlords in the private rented sector. The Council sought to help tenants, social and private, by its use of discretionary housing payments. This often helped to prevent homelessness.

The Committee spoke about homelessness and how the night shelter and Housing First programme was engaging with rough sleepers and helping them to move from the streets. The project had secured funding to continue and would be seeking to engage with people in increasingly challenging situations such as sex workers.

Resolved

That:

- 1. Members be provided with information on how many penalty notices have been issued against landlords in the private rented sector;**
- 2. Further information be provided to Members on the list estimating the people with additional needs in borough on page 21 of the draft Housing Strategy.**

213/20 FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees present feedback on the recent activity at their respective committees.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

214/20 AREAS OF FOCUS 2019/20

Resolved:

That the Areas of Focus 2019/20 be noted.

215/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 10 March 2020.

The meeting terminated at 7.28 p.m.

Chair:

Date:.....