

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON MONDAY, 7 JUNE 2021
(FROM 5.30 PM – 6.17 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Aldred in the Chair. Councillor Bernard Bateman, MBE, Councillor Michael Harrison, Councillor John Mann, Councillor Pat Marsh, Councillor Nigel Middlemass, Councillor Tom Watson and Councillor Robert Windass.

Late Arrivals: None

Early Departures: None

11/21 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES:
Apologies for absence had been received from and Councillor Norman Waller and Councillor Stuart Martin. Councillor Rebecca Burnett was acting as a substitute for Councillor Sue Lumby. Councillor Ed Darling was acting as a substitute for Councillor Sam Gibbs.

(5.32 pm)

12/21 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

(5.33 pm)

13/21 – MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 10 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

(Eight Members voted for the motion and there were two abstentions)

(5.34 pm)

14/21 – EXEMPT INFORMATION:

There was no exempt information.

(5.34 pm)

15/21 – PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS - QUESTIONS:

There were no public questions.

(5.34 pm)

16/21 – FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS:

Members noted the forthcoming decisions listed on the Forward Plan.

(5.34 pm – 5.37 pm)

17/21 – FEEDBACK FROM CABINET HELD ON 26 MAY 2021 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMENTS - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21:

The Chair submitted a report which included a copy of the comments the Commission had referred to Cabinet in relation to the Corporate Performance Report

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

2020/21. A copy of the draft Minutes from the Cabinet meeting had also been included with the meeting documents. The Chair confirmed that he had attended the meeting of Cabinet on 26 May to present the report on behalf of the Commission and Cabinet and received and noted the report. The main comments made by the Commission were to recommend that the two high risk areas highlighted in the report (see below) should be a priority for continued action:

- i. Average length of stay in temporary accommodation (hostel and bed and breakfast)
- ii. Number of new homes built by the council

(5.37 pm – 5.39 pm)

18/21 – **DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019/20 AND 2020/21:**

The Chair introduced the Draft Overview And Scrutiny Commission Annual Report For 2019/20 And 2020/21, which included a summary of the Commission's work for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Chair expressed thanks to officers for their work on the annual report, which was a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken. The report also explained, in some detail, how the scrutiny function operated at Harrogate Borough Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Michael Harrison the Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager confirmed that a minimum of eight meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission was a requirement set out within the council's constitution, the Commission usually had more than the minimum of eight meetings.

The Commission **agreed** that the Draft Overview and Scrutiny Commission Annual Report For 2019/20 and 2020/21 would be taken forward as a final version and be published on the Harrogate Borough Council website.

(5.39 pm – 5.42 pm)

19/21 – **FEEDBACK FROM OTHER COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL BODIES:**

The Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager provided an update on the work of the UCI task and finish group.

The group held a meeting on 18 May and was grateful to representatives from Harrogate International Festivals and NYCC Highways who had attended and presented detailed information and responded to Members questions. The group was undertaking a consultation exercise, two online surveys were available - one for residents and one for businesses and other organisations. The consultation would run until the 16 June 2021.

(5.42 pm – 5.44 pm)

20/21 – **SCRUTINY UPDATE/FOCUS FOR 2021/22:**

The Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager (SGRM) delivered a presentation with information that would enable the Commission to agree its focus for the coming year. This covered the principles of the scrutiny function as well as key legislation and guidance covering the operation of scrutiny within local authorities, including internal and external/partnership scrutiny. The most recent statutory guidance had been

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

published in May 2019 and the Commission had undertaken an in-depth review of the implications and this had resulted in 32 recommendations. A summary of the responsibility for the recommendations was provided:

- 17 for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission
- 4 joint Cabinet/Overview and Scrutiny Commission
- 4 Cabinet
- 7 required changes to the constitution

The SGRM provided an update on the implementation of these, referencing forthcoming local government reorganisation (LGR) in York and North Yorkshire. It was suggested that a pragmatic approach could be taken regarding the longer term recommendations that would have required some constitutional changes. It was confirmed that most of the 17 recommendations for the Commission were being implemented and an update was provided on the actions being taken, which included:

- Agreement of prioritisation criteria
- Submission of questions in advance of meetings
- Annual review of training for Commission Members and Chair
- Review of the information received by the Commission

Due to timescales around the forthcoming LGR the Commission **agreed** to continue to focus on developing the recommendations that the Commission itself was responsible for rather than those requiring changes to the constitution.

The main purpose of the item was to agree a focus for the Commission for the forthcoming year. It was confirmed that, this was in-line with the recommendations relating to the statutory guidance. It was noted that this recommendation had already been implemented for 2019/20 as the Commission had agreed a focus on COVID-19 response and recovery. The SGRM introduced some suggestions for the focus in 2021/22:

- Council Finance
- Risk
- Performance
- Working with partners
- Continued overview on COVID-19 response/recovery
- Overview of work to support to LGR

Members considered that once a focus for the year was agreed the Commission could still undertake any urgent or important item of work when it deemed necessary. Following discussion the Commission **agreed** a joint focus for 2021/22, this was:

- Continued overview of COVID-19 response/recovery
- Overview of work to support to LGR

The SGRM provided information on the suggested prioritisation criteria for potential work items as agreed in the statutory guidance recommendations and summarised below. He explained the scoring scale for each one and that any potential work items

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

would be scored using these criteria.

- Impact – based on an impact score (0-3)
- Importance – based on
 - o An evidence score (0-3)
 - o A relevance to focus score (0-3)
 - o Relevance to corporate priorities score (0-3)
 - o Timeliness/resources score (0-3)

The prioritisation criteria were **agreed** by the Commission. It was confirmed that previously identified work items and new suggestions would be scored using these criteria at an informal work planning workshop which would be held remotely on 14 June 2021.

(5.44 pm - 6.17 pm)