



TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday, 16 October 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey GU21 6YL.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

JULIE FISHER
Chief Executive

NOTE: Filming Council Meetings

Please note the meeting will be filmed and will be broadcast live and subsequently as an archive on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk). The images and sound recording will also be used for training purposes within the Council. Generally the public seating areas are not filmed. However by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed.

AGENDA

PART I - PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

- 1 Apologies for Absence
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 Minutes (to follow)
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 September 2023 as published.
- 3 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)
To review any outstanding items from the previous minutes.
- 4 Urgent Business
To consider any business that the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5 Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

Matters for Determination

- 6 Work Programme (Pages 11 - 24)
Reporting Person: Councillor Josh Brown

Matters for Scrutiny

- 7 Freedom Leisure Annual Review OSC23-050 (Pages 25 - 30)
Reporting Person: Steve May
- 8 Public Participation at Planning Committee OSC23-049 (Pages 31 - 42)
Reporting Person: Beverley Kuchar
- 9 Task & Finish Group: HS2 Funding for Brookwood Cemetery OSC23-051 (Pages 43 - 48)
To consider the drafted Terms of Reference for the Task & Finish Group.
Reporting Person: Councillor Josh Brown

Working Group Updates

- 10 Housing Working Group Update (Pages 49 - 50)
To receive an update on the meetings of the Group held on 26 July 2023 and 4 October 2023.
Reporting Person: Councillor Tahir Aziz

Performance Management

- 11 Financial Monitoring Report (Pages 51 - 62)

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published: 6 October 2023

For further information regarding this agenda and arrangements for the meeting, please contact Toby Nash, Scrutiny & Democratic Services Officer, Ext 3056, Email toby.nash@woking.gov.uk



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on matters arising from the previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The details summarise the progress made on achieving the desired outcomes from decisions taken by the Committee and requests from individual Elected Members. Once an action has been closed and the outcome reported to the Committee it will be removed from future reports.

Actions arising from the Committee are managed through the Council's Action Management system which was developed to capture and monitor the actions arising from (i) meetings of the Council and (ii) Internal Audit Reviews.

This is a regular report that is brought the Committee and covers the actions identified at the previous meetings. The next version of this report, listing any actions previously identified together with the progress achieved shall be brought to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 November 2023.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.
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Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Councillor Josh Brown
CllrJosh.Brown@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 6 October 2023

Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

Update on Actions Arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2023.

Minute 3		Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes
3.1	Action	Biannual Review of Complaints
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 10 July 2023.</i> Officers to consult with Members on information, statistics and complaints for the report to ensure all queries are satisfied and define those that are otherwise reported to other Committees and Working Groups.
	Responsible Person	Gareth John / Beverley Kuchar / Toby Nash
	Status	Ongoing
3.2	Action	Officers to provide information on why the percentage of rising 18-year-olds was significantly lower than previous years.
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 10 July 2023.</i> The number of attainers (16- and 17-year-olds) registering to vote has declined over the past several years across all Local Authorities in Surrey, declining at a similar rate to that seen in Woking. As of December 2022, there were 486 attainers on the electoral register. As comparison, there were 923 attainers on the register in 2019. As part of the yearly canvas this year electoral Officers will be raising awareness of the ability to register to vote with 16- and 17-year-olds and such will be promoted by social media.
	Responsible Person	Emera Chown
	Status	Completed

Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (11 September 2023)

3.3	Action	Officers to provide information on the Council's ability to deliver affordable homes in light of its financial position.
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 10 July 2023.</i> Woking Borough Council will focus on securing affordable homes through the planning process and building relationships with housing associations, which was the subject of discussion at the October meeting of the Housing Working Group.
	Responsible Person	Louise Strongitharm
	Status	Completed
3.4	Action	Information on if an apprenticeship scheme was in place at the ThamesWey Group.
	Progress	ThamesWey currently has no apprentices.
	Responsible Person	ThamesWey
	Status	Completed
3.5	Action	The ThamesWey Group information to be updated to a more readable format, in line with that provided at Member briefings.
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 10 July 2023.</i> The information presented in the Green Book, as well as how the information is presented, is currently under review.
	Responsible Person	Pino Mastromarco
	Status	Ongoing

Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (11 September 2023)

3.6	Action	Officers to provide information on externally funded posts at the Council.
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 14 August 2023.</i> Efforts to establish as many staff as possible through external funding and transfer to partners is ongoing through the organisation redesign. Once the restructure has occurred information can be provided to Members.
	Responsible Person	Directors
	Status	Completed
3.7	Action	A glossary of terms to be produced to accompany the Improvement and Recovery Report.
	Progress	<i>From the meeting of the Committee on 14 August 2023.</i> A glossary of terms has been produced (Appendix 1) and shall be included in updates to the Improvement and Recovery Programme.
	Responsible Person	Lee Danson
	Status	Completed

Minute 9	Work Programme	
9.1	Action	Officers to draft a Terms of Reference for the HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Funding Task & Finish Group
	Progress	A draft Terms of Reference has been included for the Committee's consideration.
	Responsible Person	Toby Nash
	Status	Completed
9.2	Action	Officers to arrange workshop(s) ahead of Budget setting for the 2024/25 year, which was to occur in February 2024.
	Progress	Officers have built into the timetable for the finance papers dates for workshop.
	Responsible Person	Section 151 Officer / Democratic Services
	Status	Completed

Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (11 September 2023)

Minute 10		MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy)
10.1	Action	Officers to provide more details on the cost of delivery services.
	Progress	This is being developed for future editions of the MTFS.
	Responsible Person	Corporate Leadership Team
	Status	Completed
10.2	Action	Officers undertook to provide details on the cost of running Pool in the Park and subsidy from the Council.
	Progress	Officers are working to provide the information to Members.
	Responsible Person	Section 151 Officer / Strategic Director of Communities.
	Status	Ongoing
10.3	Action	Officers undertook to review the costs of pavilions and if they could be split by facility.
	Progress	On review, the piece of work is significant and complex due to much of the cost being bundled into larger contracts. Officers instead propose working with any interested party, once identified, to consider all costs associated with a pavilion.
	Responsible Person	Corporate Leadership Team
	Status	Completed

Glossary

- **Channel shift** - Channel shift is the process by which organisations encourage customers to change the way they choose to interact with services, from the customers' current preferred approach to a new one. For example encouraging customers that can, to move to self-service, primarily using online and digital services rather than in-person, by phone or paper forms.
- **Commercial strategy** – A plan to maximise the return from the council's and company assets.
- **Commissioning Team** - A team of three individuals appointed by government to intervene in certain functions within the council following its 'best value duty' failings. They provide support in areas such as financial and commercial governance and strategic decision-making.
- **Discretionary services** - Services that the council are not legally obliged to offer.
- **DLUHC** – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- **FCP** – Financial Control Panel. A panel consisting of at least four senior employees chaired by the Director of Finance (or their deputy) whose responsibility is to approve council spend before it is committed, or anything is ordered.
- **FFTF** – Fit for the Future. A programme of actions to ensure that the council is financially sustainable. This includes identifying and implementing the savings or additional income to meet the budget deficit, improve governance and controls and transform the council to be 'fit for the future'.
- **Gateway process** - A fundamental part of the FFTF programme, the Gateway Process is a three-stage process which has systematically reviewed all service areas across the organisation and identified where savings can be made and the minimum level of service provision.
- **LGA** – Local Government Association. The national membership body for local authorities who work on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government.
- **MRP** – Minimum Revenue Provision. The minimum amount of funding that a council must set aside to use towards capital expenditure as financed through either borrowing or debt. Accounting standards guide local authorities to determine what that minimum amount is.
- **MTFP/MTFS** - Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) are the council's approach and delivery plans to managing its budgets.
- **HRA** – Housing Revenue Account. Records expenditure and income on running a council's own housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which are provided primarily for the benefit of its own tenants.
- **PWLB** – Public Works Loan Board. Local authority lending facility operated by the UK Debt Management Office (DMO) on behalf of HM Treasury. This borrowing is for capital projects.
- **S151 Officer** – Section 151 (Monitoring) Officer. The Chief Finance Officer for a council. S151 refers to the Section 151 of 1972 Local Government Act which specifies that each council must employ a responsible finance officer with the authority and has certain powers including S114.
- **SAG** – Shareholder Advisory Group. Provides a clear focus for councillors to set out policy, strategy and control for the companies that it funds. Separates the roles of Council Directors on company boards and the Shareholder interest.
- **SLS** – Shareholder Liaison Service. An officer group, containing experts, set up to support the SAG.
- **VSWL** – Victoria Square Woking Limited. A joint venture company to oversee the development of the Victoria Square project.



Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

This Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is published with the purpose of assisting the Council in its overview and scrutiny role. The Work Programme covers the following areas:

- Items for consideration at future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Scrutiny Review Topics proposed by Members of the Council for inclusion on the Work Programme.
- Topics identified for pre-decision scrutiny.
- The draft forward programme of work for the Executive.
- Details of the current Task and Working Groups under the Committee's remit.

The Work Programme is designed to assist the Council with its overview and scrutiny role by providing Members with an indication of the current work, topics to be considered for review, and items which the Executive expects to consider at its future meetings, so that matters can be raised beforehand and/or consultations undertaken with a Member of the Executive prior to the relevant meeting.

Any changes to the Work Programme since it was last published have been highlighted in green.

The Committee	
Chairman: Councillor Josh Brown	
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Adam Kirby	
Councillor H Akberali	Councillor A Caulfield
Councillor K Davis	Councillor A Javaid
Councillor R Leach	Councillor J Morley
Councillor L Rice	Councillor M Sullivan
2023/24 Committee Dates	
05 June 2023	10 July 2023
14 August 2023 (Extraordinary)	11 September 2023
16 October 2023	20 November 2023
22 January 2024	19 February 2024
18 March 2024	

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Councillor Josh Brown
Email: CllrJosh.Brown@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person: Toby Nash, Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer
Email: toby.nash@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3056

Date Published: 6 October 2023

REPORT ENDS

Suggested Additions to the Work Programme

Following the last meeting of the Committee, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman provided Officers with a list of items for consideration over the coming year. Where possible, these have been added to the Work Programme. Set out below are any ideas which have been suggested or requested but are yet to be included against a specific meeting of the Committee.

Topic	Proposed by	Officer Comment
Biannual Overview of Complaints Report	Chair and Vice-Chair (2021/22)	Following the meeting of the Committee on 21 February 2022 it was expressed by Members that the possibility of having this report appear at the Committee twice a year, as opposed to once a year would be beneficial.
Invite Thames Water	OSC	Following the meeting of the Committee on 23 January 2023 it was suggested that Thames Water be invited to attend a future meeting of the OSC once improvements to local treatment works had been completed.
Invite Commissioners	Chair and Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Invite the DLUHC-appointed Commissioners to a future meeting of the Committee.
Scrutiny of definitions of statutory and non-statutory services	Chair and Overview and Scrutiny Committee	The Committee is interested in considering how Officers determined statutory and non-statutory services.

The Work Programme 2023/24

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 20 November 2023

1 – Performance Management

1.1 Performance Monitoring Information. For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance Monitoring Information (Green Book).

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2 – Matters for Consideration

2.1 Work Programme. For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2.2 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Section 151 Officer

2.3 Housing Revenue Account.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Louise Strongitharm

2.4 Improvement and Recovery Programme Update.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Lee Danson

2.5 Member Training Update.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Toby Nash

3 – Working Group Updates

3.1 Working Group Update. To receive an update from any meetings of the Working Groups under the remit of the Committee.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Chair of each Working Group

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 22 January 2024

1 – Performance Management

1.1 Performance Monitoring Information. For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance Monitoring Information (Green Book).

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2 – Matters for Consideration

2.1 Work Programme. For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2.2 Joint Waste Management Performance Review.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Neighbourhood Services

3 – Working Group Updates

3.1 Working Group Update. To receive an update from any meetings of the Working Groups under the remit of the Committee.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Chair of each Working Group

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 19 February 2024

1 – Performance Management

1.1 Performance Monitoring Information. For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance Monitoring Information (Green Book).

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2 – Matters for Consideration

2.1 Work Programme. For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2.2 Freedom of Information Requests Annual Report.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Monitoring Officer

2.3 Annual Review of Complaints.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Monitoring Officer

2.4 Enterprise M3. To receive a review of the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Strategic Director of Place

3 – Working Group Updates

3.1 Working Group Update. To receive an update from any meetings of the Working Groups under the remit of the Committee.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Chair of each Working Group

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 18 March 2024

1 – Performance Management

1.1 Performance Monitoring Information. For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance Monitoring Information (Green Book).

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2 – Matters for Consideration

2.1 Work Programme. For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2.2 Annual Update on Climate Change.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Green Infrastructure Team

2.3 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Councillor Brown

2.4 Safer Working Partnership – Community Safety Plan. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gave local authorities responsibility for considering crime and disorder matters. In 2010 the Committee agreed that the Safer Working Partnership Plan would be brought forward annually for scrutiny.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Community Safety Team

2.5 Improvement and Recovery Programme Update.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Lee Danson

3 – Working Group Updates

3.1 Working Group Update. To receive an update from any meetings of the Working Groups under the remit of the Committee.

Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person/Team
None	None	Chair of each Working Group

The Draft Executive Work Programme

The following list sets out the draft forward programme of work for the Executive over the coming year. The programme is subject to additions and alterations and will be updated for future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The purpose of the list is to enable the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to identify those items they would like to scrutinise under the Committee’s function of pre-decision scrutiny. The list includes those items for recommendation to Council as well as those for determination by the Executive.

Executive – 16 November 2023

Matters for Consideration

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1) | Company Governance and Funding Updates on Victoria Square Woking Ltd and ThamesWey Housing Ltd (Sheerwater) |
| 2) | Review of Fees and Charges 2024-25 |
| 3) | Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) |
| 4) | Calendar of Meetings 2024-25 |
| 5) | Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and General Fund Budget 2024-25 |
| 6) | Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget Update 2024-25 |
| 7) | Mid-Year Review of Treasury Management |
| 8) | General Fund and HRA Outturn Report 2022-23 |
| 9) | CIL – Application for Funding – West Byfleet Rec Tennis Court Enhancement |
| 10) | Write off of Irrecoverable Debt |
| 11) | Performance and Financial Monitoring Information |
| 12) | Financial Monitoring Report – Budget Monitoring and Forecast 2023-24 – Quarter 2 |

Executive – 18 January 2024

Matters for Consideration

- 1) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update
- 2) Performance and Financial Monitoring Information
- 3) Monitoring Reports - Projects

Executive – 1 February 2024

Matters for Consideration

- 1) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2024-25
- 2) Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2024-25
- 3) Investment Programme 2023-24 to 2027-28
- 4) Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies
- 5) Performance and Financial Monitoring Information
- 6) Financial Monitoring Report – Budget Monitoring and Forecast 2023-24 – Quarter 3

Executive – 21 March 2024

Matters for Consideration

- 1) Climate Change Strategy
- 2) Working Environment Action (WEAct) – Recommendations and Responses
- 3) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Annual Monitoring Report
- 4) Write off of Irrecoverable Debt
- 5) Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

Current Working and Task Groups Responsible to the Committee

The table below provides a list of current Working and Task Groups established by the Committee, including an indication of the resource requirements and the anticipated completion date. Any updates on the progress of individual Working and Task Groups are included elsewhere on the Committee's agenda.

Economic Development Working Group	
Remit:	<p>The Economic Development Working Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council representing all Groups on the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group will be expected to gain the views of Councillors/ Officers/ other representatives with a view to reporting those views to the Working Group.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group may also be charged with specific areas to research and report back on to the Working Group.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group may be expected to present proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, prepare written reports.</p>
Membership:	Councillors Barker, Davis, Javaid, Morley, Mukherjee, Oades, Roberts.
Resources:	Officer and Councillor time.
Date Established:	11.03.09

Finance Working Group	
Remit:	<p>The Working Group has been established as a Standing Working Group to review financial issues as identified either by itself or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Working Group will receive financial information, including reports to the Executive, to enable it to undertake effective scrutiny of the financial performance of the Council.</p> <p>The Working Group will receive reports on areas such as Treasury Management, Budget Process and Financial Forecast, Statement of Accounts, Investment Programme, Review of Fees and Charges, General Fund Budget, Update on Commercial Rents, Update on Irrecoverable Debt, and matters arising from the Green Book. Its Work Programme will be received at each Working Group meeting.</p>
Membership:	Councillors Akberali, Aziz, Davis, Kirby, Oades, Rice, Roberts.
Resources:	Officer and Councillor time.
Date Established:	25.05.06

HIF Working Group	
Remit:	<p>The HIF Working Group has been established following the decision on 23 May 2022 to taking on the responsibilities of the Aggregates Site Working Group and the HIF Oversight Panel.</p> <p>The Working Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council representing all Groups on the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group will be expected to gain the views of Councillors/ Officers/ Portfolio Holder / External Advisors and other representatives with a view to reporting those views to the Working Group.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group may also be charged with specific areas to research and report back on to the Working Group.</p> <p>Working Group Members may be expected to present proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, prepare written reports.</p>
Membership:	Councillors Akberali, Boote, Cosnahan, Dorsett, Johnson, Lyons, Sullivan.
Resources:	Officer and Councillor time.
Date Established:	23.05.22

Housing Working Group	
Remit:	<p>The Housing Working Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council representing all Groups on the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group will be expected to gain the views of Councillors/ Officers/ Portfolio Holder / External Advisors and other representatives with a view to reporting those views to the Working Group.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group may also be charged with specific areas to research and report back on to the Working Group.</p> <p>Working Group Members may be expected to present proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, prepare written reports.</p>
Membership:	Councillors Aziz, Boote, Cosnahan, Dorsett, Johnson, Lyons, Sullivan.
Resources:	Officer and Councillor time.
Date Established:	25.05.06

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

FREEDOM LEISURE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Executive Summary

This report sets out the performance review of Freedom Leisure, including assessments on quality and performance management, KPIs and the priorities for year 2022/2023. Complaints, feedback and achievements are reviewed in the report as Freedom Leisure provide a wide range of services to the public.

In general Freedom Leisure have achieved the Key Performance Indicators set out in the Leisure Partnership Agreement and continue to work in partnership with the council. Freedom is aware and being supportive in the identification of future savings and the need to work towards a financially neutral position in the provision of leisure.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None

Reporting Person: Steve May, Leisure Services Manager
Email: steve.may@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person: Steve May, Leisure Services Manager
Email: steve.may@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3302

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nicolson
Email: CllrEllen.Nicolson@Woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 6 October 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Leisure Partnership Agreement commenced on 1st December 2011. The Woking and Guildford partnerships were procured as part of a joint process that required a turnover threshold/scale of organisation that would have been challenging for Freedom Leisure to have met at the time on their own. Freedom Leisure therefore asked GLL to be the “principal” contractor, with Freedom Leisure delivering the contract, as a sub-contractor to them. The bid was written by Freedom Leisure who are fully responsible for its delivery. GLL receive an annual fee from Freedom Leisure for underwriting the original bid and holding the risk of Freedom Leisure failing to perform.
- 1.2 Since the original agreement the contract has had several major changes which include 3 new pavilions, the Sportsbox at Hoe Valley and Eastwood Leisure Centre.
- 1.3 The inclusion of Sportsbox also triggered the contract extension clause in the main contract which is for a further 4 years. Contract end is now 30th November 2025.
- 1.4 Separate to the contract Freedom have also been successful in securing the contract to run the kiosk in Woking Park.
- 1.5 In September 2018, Woking Park Tennis Courts were removed from the Leisure Contract and returned to the management of Woking Borough Council.

2.0 Priorities for 2022-2023

- 2.1 Freedom Leisure in consultation with Officers and their customers set a list of key priorities for 2022-2023. These were presented to the Leisure Partnership Board at the end of 2022 and agreed by this Board.

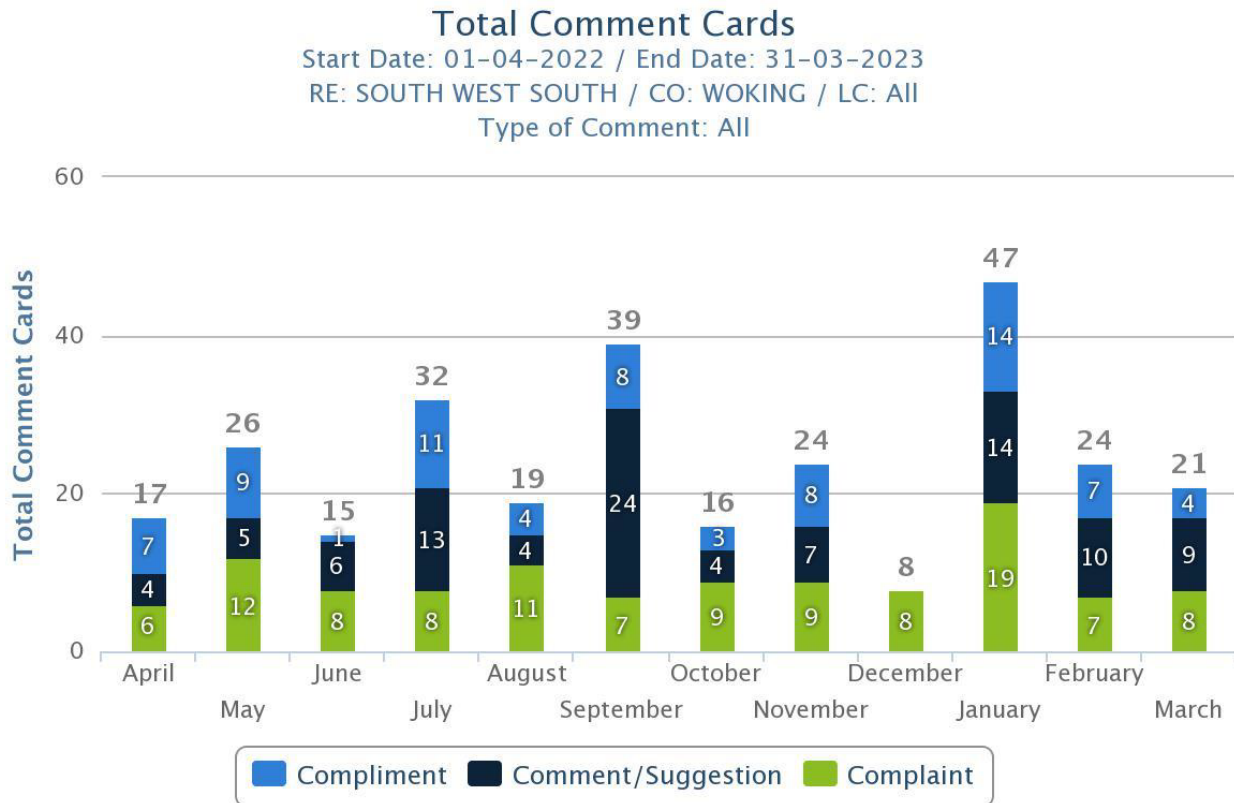
3.0 Performance during the 2022-2023

- 3.1 Overall, the leisure contract has over 1M visitors, Pool in the Park was the busiest of the venues with over 300,000 visitors down to our sports pavilions which some are only seeing a few hundred visitors a year. (St Johns Lye being the pavilion used the least with only 240 visits). Overall, though this is very good news and shows some good growth in number from the previous year. The contract has a whole has seen an enormous growth from 639 thousand visits in 2021-22 to 1,01 million in 2022-23.
- 3.2 This growth is linked to two main factors. The opening of Eastwood Leisure Centre. The year 2021-22 only included 5 months of operating figures. In 2021-22 only 66 thousand visits were recorded but in this last year just over 200 thousand visits have been seen. Secondly covid recovery continues with more people returning to leisure centres.
- 3.3 With Eastwood Leisure Centres numbers included we have just surpassed the highest attendance figures recorded, but if we were to remove these, attendances are 18% down on the pre-covid attendances.
- 3.4 Freedom Leisure deliver an extensive Active Communities Programme across the borough targeting those areas with the highest levels of deprivation. The team have worked with council officers and partners in the NHS to deliver a range of health products such as Covid Recovery, GP referral, Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehab. Further to this a range of classes around weight loss, diabetes management and falls prevention are offered.
- 3.5 Holiday Activity Fund: This is the scheme the government launched in 2021 to ensure all children in receipt of free school meals are able to access food and activity during the school

holidays. Freedom have run a very successful service, securing funding from Active Surrey to deliver 1700 meals and activity to children based in Woking.

3.6 Customer Satisfaction: Each year Freedom provide monitoring on customer satisfaction. A Net Promoter Score System is utilised throughout the year to analyse how members feels about the services provided and this is backed up further with user surveys to wider groups of facility users such as the football clubs or other sporting hirers.

3.7 Comment cards are also collected and breakdown for this can be seen below:



3.8 In total 288 cards have been received, of which 76 are compliments, 112 are complaints with the rest being suggestions.

3.9 Many of the complaints were about closures or part closures of the pool. There is a national shortage of lifeguards and as such there have numerous occasions where the pool could not safely open. In some instances, this was very last minute with staff calling in sick for a 6am start and as such the pools could not open. Understandably this has led to some members being very unhappy and the requirement for better resilience to be sought.

3.10 The positive comments have a really good theme and often are around helping those most in need through the health classes, or group exercise and really highlights the strength of the directly run sessions that Freedom have been putting on.

4.0 Improvements and significant changes to the service provision

4.1 A significant amount of refurbishment work has been completed in the year as follows:

- Woking Leisure Centre:
 - Upgraded Toilet Sanitary Goods
 - Gents Ceiling change replacement
 - Doors and Iron Monger replaced where required
 - Whole building has been decorated
 - Refurbished party room
- Pool in the Park
 - All Hairdryers replaced
 - Floor in showers has been replaced (again)
 - Improved signage
 - Spa Pool blowers replaced
- Sports Box
 - Basketball Hoop replacements
 - New track sound system

5.0 Financial position

5.1 Freedom Leisure Pays WBC a management fee. This fee is surpluses made within the contract and for this year this was £553K up from £247K last year. Unfortunately, whilst this was a great increase and linked to the afore mentioned attendance growth and some operational decisions to the management structure it did not cover the growth in costs of utilities. The price per unit for electricity did increase four-fold. Utilities remain the cost of the councils and as such led to the leisure contract as a whole running at a significant deficit.

6.0 Key Performance Indicators

6.1 Freedom Leisure reports a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Leisure Partnership Board twice a year.

Audits:

6.2 Freedom undergoes a range of audits each year. These include pool safety, health and safety and quality assessments:

6.3 Health and Safety Audits were conducted at all sites all achieving a good standard with a particular focus on opening in a COVID safe way.

6.4 Accident statistics are monitored monthly as follows:

- Woking Leisure Centre: 273 accidents (0.07%)
- Pool in the Park: 138 accidents (0.03%)
- Sportsbox: 19 (0.01%)
- Eastwood Leisure Centre: 31 (0.012%)

The percentage relates to against users and anything over 0.10% would require further investigation. It is worth noting that Woking Leisure Centres is slightly higher than the other sites due to the nature of its activities. Having a very well subscribed set of youth activities does lead by the nature of the activity to more “low” level accidents.

6.5 Environmental Health Audits (Conducted by the Borough) on food safety. All Sites achieve the highest 5-star rating. Costa also do their own audits with all sites passing with above average scores.

7.0 Moving forward

- 7.1 Freedom have presented a business plan to Leisure Partnership Board for 2023-2024. LPB requested some amendments that will be discussed at the next Board meeting but fundamentally were happy with the progress.
- 7.2 Increased focus continues towards health and wellbeing rather than activity and fitness. Whilst a minor change it encompasses the really positive links that have been made with health professionals at St Peters, and the GP practices.
- 7.3 Working towards a cost neutral overall position for leisure is essential. Running leisure more commercially remains the focus to maximise the surplus available to help support the utility costs.
- 7.4 Closures of some facilities are being investigated and consulted upon along with a range of other options that need to be explored to see if the subsidy can be reduced.

REPORT ENDS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

Under the current constitution, applications which are reported to planning committee for determination attract public speaking if 10 or more individual objections have been received prior to the designated cut-off date which is 14 days prior to the meeting. After reviewing the procedure for public speaking it is proposed to amend the threshold to 5 objections and to also include supporters of applications.

Accompanying this report are two appendices. Appendix 1 shows the tracked changes to the Constitution and Appendix 2 contains the draft new section of the Constitution as would be inserted.

Recommendations

RESOLVE That

the Committee support the amended Public Participation at Planning Committee section of the Constitution (Appendix 2).

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting person:	Beverley Kuchar, Acting Strategic Director of Place Email: beverley.kuchar@woking.gov.uk
Contact Person:	Thomas James, Development Manager Email: thomas.james@woking.gov.uk , Extn 3435
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Liam Lyons Email: cllrliam.lyons@woking.gov.uk
Date Published:	06 October 2023

Public Participation at Planning Committee

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council resolved to introduce public participation at Planning Committee meetings (formerly the Development Control Sub-Committee) on 25 February 1997. The constitution sets out the criteria for applications which are reported to planning committee which enable public speaking to take place.
- 1.2 For the purpose of expediency and the efficient running of planning committee, a threshold was established of 10 individual objections must be received prior to a designated cut-off date. This is an important part of the running of planning committee to enable it to run efficiently whilst allowing public speaking to take part. It is important to continually review the operational needs of the Planning Service and the needs upon the service evolve over time.

2.0 Current arrangements for public speaking

- 2.1 The current arrangements as set out in the Constitution is only applicable to planning applications. It does not include Certificates of Lawful Use and Development or applications for work to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders. The Public may speak when any application which attracts ten or more individual objections (a petition will be regarded as one objection) prior to the designated cut-off date, which will be 14 days prior to the meeting or, if later, the expiry of the 21-day period for receipt of representations.
- 2.2 In addition, the public have a right to address the planning committee on the following applications irrespective of the number of objections made:
 - i) any application which in the opinion of the Borough Planning Officer raises major policy issues which is at variance with approved planning policies, or is of such a magnitude that significant planning issues are raised;
 - ii) any application for development requiring an Environmental Statement under the provisions of Schedule I and II of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 and any subsequent amending regulations;
 - iii) applications for major commercial (retail, industrial or business) development with a floor space exceeding 2500 sq. metres (outline or detailed applications), but not reserved matters; and
 - iv) applications for residential developments of over 50 dwellings (outline or detailed applications), but not reserved matters.
- 2.3 Only one representor of the objectors is allowed to make an oral representation. This is done on a 'first come first served' basis, i.e. the first person to register on the dedicated answerphone. Applicants or agents will be notified, advising them of the date of the meeting and that they also have the right to make an oral presentation if objectors have given notice that they wish to make representations. Representors views are heard in the following order: representative of the objectors and agent/applicant. Each speaker is allocated three minutes.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 A review of the operational needs of public speaking at planning committee has been undertaken by officers from the planning, legal and democratic services. This has included benchmarking public speaking arrangements at other Surrey planning authorities. The results of the benchmarking can be seen in the table below.

Public Participation at Planning Committee

Authority	Threshold for public speaking at committee
Elmbridge	No threshold, all applications which go to committee can have public speaking. 1 speaker in support (agent) and one objector. 3 minutes each and Members can ask them questions.
Epsom and Ewell	No threshold, all applications which go to committee can have public speaking
Guildford	10 reps for householder and 20 reps for non-householder contrary to officers' recommendation. 2 speakers for support/against.
Mole Valley	20 reps from different households or petition of 50 signatures from different households.
Reigate and Banstead	No threshold, all applications which go to committee can have public speaking.
Runnymede	3 written objections from individual addresses.
Spelthorne	No threshold, all applications which go to committee can have public speaking.
Surrey CC	No threshold, all applications which to committee can have public speaking. Up to 5 objectors and 5 supporters can speak on an application.
Surrey Heath	10 reps in urban areas and 5 reps in rural areas to trigger public speaking. 2 objectors can speak for 4 mins and Cllrs can ask questions.
Tandridge	No threshold, all applications which go to committee can have public speaking.
Waverley	5 or more objectors/supporters. 1 objector and 1 supporter can speak for 4 mins.
Woking	10 individual objectors/supporters on planning applications only need to be received 14 days before committee. Plus, applications which are subject to Environmental Statements, residential developments of over 50 dwellings and buildings over 2,500sq.m. 1 objector/supporter and agent can speak for 3 mins.

- 3.2** As can be noted there is no consistency amongst the Surrey authorities and the threshold vary considerably. There are some authorities which have no threshold and all applications which are reported to planning committee attract public speaking to were 20 representations from different households is required. This variation reflects the different nature of each local authority, how rural/urban they are and what scheme of delegation they have in place.
- 3.3** The function of the Planning Committee is to scrutinise and decide those applications which have an important role in fulfilling strategic objectives or are contentious and require closely balanced judgements. The Planning Committee is a regulatory committee and the primary role of Councillors on the committee is to make planning decisions based on the development plan and relevant material planning considerations. It is not to represent local community views. Planning decisions need to ensure they accord with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (including the NPPF). It is necessary therefore to strike the correct balance between the efficient running of planning committee and enabling public participation where the objectors/supporters can put forward representations orally. Written representations received on applications are summarized in the committee report and are available to view online. Where written representations are received after the agenda has been published, these are also placed online and officers provide a verbal update at committee. Therefore, comments from third parties and consultees are always taken into account.
- 3.4** To enable greater public participation at planning committee whilst also maintaining business at planning committee is run efficiently, it is proposed to reduce the current threshold of 10 objectors to 5. The current arrangements for public speaking is only applicable where an application has received 10 objections. There has been and can be instances where applications are reported to planning committee where there are supporters of the proposal. The current arrangement only refers to objectors so in instances such as these where there

Public Participation at Planning Committee

are supporters of the proposal, no public speaking is allowed. It is proposed to expand the public speaking arrangements to include supporters of applications as well. Clarity is also proposed to make it clear individual objectors/supporters need to come from separate households.

- 3.5** The proposed changes to the public speaking arrangements will not affect the scheme of delegation and these will remain as set out in the Council's consultation.

4.0 Corporate Strategy

- 4.1 The additional measures arising from this report will support delivery of the corporate plan objectives for engaged communities, informed and consulted residents and a transparent, listening and learning council.

5.0 Implications

Finance and risk

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.
- 5.2 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 5.3 There are no equalities or human resource implications associated with this report.

Legal

- 5.4 Legal Services have been consulted and have not raised any concerns.

6.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 6.1 Discussions have been made with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee as well as the Portfolio Holder of Planning.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 RESOLVE That

the Committee support the amended Public Participation at Planning Committee section of the Constitution (Appendix 2).

Public Participation at Planning Committee

1.0 Principles

- 1.1. The Council resolved to introduce public participation at meetings of the Development Control Sub-Committee which was brought into operation on 25 February 1997. The principles now apply to the Planning Committee which was established in May 2000 as a result of the introduction of new Council democratic structures at that time.
- 1.2. The number of objectors or supporters required before a planning application qualifies for public speaking at the Planning Committee is ~~ten~~ five (5).

2.0 Definitions

Applications on which the Public may Speak

- 2.1. The public speaking scheme applies only to planning applications. It does not include Certificates of Lawful Use and Development or applications for work to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders.
- ~~2.2.~~ Public may speak when on any application which attracts ~~ten~~ five (5) or more individual objections or letters of support. ~~(a petition will be regarded as one objection)~~
- ~~2.3.~~ The threshold must be met prior to the designated cut-off date, which will be 14 days prior to the meeting or, if later, the expiry of the 21-day period for receipt of representations.
- ~~2.4.~~ When considering an objection or letter of support:
- ~~2.4.1.~~ a petition will be regarded as one objection or letter of support; and
- ~~2.2-2.4.2.~~ only one objection or letter of support may be submitted per household. Should more than one be submitted, only the first shall be considered.
- ~~2.3-2.5.~~ In addition, the public will have the right to address the Committee on any of the following types of applications (see below) irrespective of the number of objections made:
- (i) any application which in the opinion of the Borough Planning Officer raises major policy issues which is at variance with approved planning policies, or is of such a magnitude that significant planning issues are raised;
 - (ii) any application for development requiring an Environmental Statement under the provisions of Schedule I and II of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 and any subsequent amending regulations;
 - (iii) applications for major commercial (retail, industrial or business) development with a floor space exceeding 2500 sq. metres (outline or detailed applications), but not reserved matters; and
 - (iv) applications for residential developments of over 50 dwellings (outline or detailed applications), but not reserved matters.

2.4.2.6. Council applications are also subject to the same criteria set out above.

Applications that Officers shall normally give a presentation to the Committee

2.5.2.7. This category will be of the type currently included on Section A and B of the Planning Committee agenda which would include:

- (i) developments proposing in excess of one dwelling;
- (ii) certain applications for change of use;
- (iii) non-controversial business or industrial/warehouse or retail proposals;
- (iv) all development proposals (including minor applications) submitted by the Council; and
- (v) applications involving a Member of the Council or staff.

2.6.2.8. A presentation will also be given on any application where the public exercise a right to speak.

Applications which will not be formally presented to the Committee unless specifically requested by Councillors on which the public will not be invited to speak

2.7.2.9. This will normally be other minor applications which have been referred to the Committee at the request of Borough Planning Officer which would normally be dealt with under delegated powers.

2.8.2.10. Also, minor applications where enforcement action is being recommended will not normally be presented by Officers but will be included on this section of the Planning Committee agenda.

3.0 Procedures

Informing the Public

- 3.1. The letters which are sent to persons identified under the Council's neighbour notification procedure will also include advice that objectors may have a right to speak at Committee meetings and will enclose an information leaflet explaining what happens at the Committee meeting.
- 3.2. The agenda is normally published seven clear days prior to the Committee meeting. The 'cut-off' point for receipt of letters, or electronic communications, which would fall into the criteria of allowing public speaking shall be 14 days prior to the meeting or, if later, the expiry of the 21-day period for receipt of representations.
- 3.3. At the end of the working day, 14 days prior to the meeting at which the application is to be considered or later (as the case may be), the case Officer s/team leaders will advise the Borough Planning Officer of those applications intended for inclusion on the agenda which have attracted five (5)10 (see point 1.2 above) or more objections (and, of course, those applications which the right to speak arises irrespective of the number of objections).
- 3.4. If the representations received exceed five (5)10 (see point 1.2 above) individual letters (a petition would count as one objection or letter of support, but standardised

letters will be treated as individual letters) then notification will be sent to all those persons advising them of their right to speak (in the case of a petition the first named person). The letter will be sent first class **no later than the Wednesday following the dispatch of the agenda which is normally received by Councillors on the Tuesday evening preceding** (also letters need to be sent to any objectors to major applications with less than ~~five (5)~~¹⁰ (see paragraph 1.3. above) objections which are to be included on the first part of the agenda).

- 3.5. The current letter sent to applicants or agents has been revised, advising them of the date of the meeting and that they also have the right to make an oral presentation if objectors or supporters have given notice that they wish to make representations.
- 3.6. A list of the objectors and supporters (in all the categories where the right to speak exists) will be advised to the Democratic Services Officer together with details (and a contact number if known) of the agent or applicant.
- 3.7. In the letter advising the representors that they may speak at the meeting; they will be required to register an interest no later than 4.00 p.m. on the Monday prior to the day of the Committee meeting (or 9.00 a.m. on the Tuesday following Bank Holidays). Representors will be required to leave their details on a 24hr answerphone which will be open from 9.00 a.m. on the day after the agenda goes out. Democratic Services will have responsibility for monitoring and actioning calls.
- 3.8. The representor will be advised of the arrangements for the procedure at the Committee and the agent or applicant will be contacted and advised that representations are to be made.
- 3.9. Only one representor of the objectors or supporters will be allowed to make an oral representation. This should be done on a 'first come first served' basis, i.e. the first person to register on the dedicated answerphone. Any subsequent representors wishing to speak will be advised by the Democratic Services Officer to contact the person who will be appearing so that representations can be combined if necessary.

4.0 Procedure at Committee

- 4.1. All speakers will be required to report to the Democratic Services Officer in the Council Chamber no later than 6.45 p.m. on the night of the Committee. The Democratic Services Officer will meet the speakers and explain procedures and give directions as to where to sit in the Chamber. If the objector fails to appear then the applicant/agent will not be entitled to speak.
- 4.2. Where more than one person has registered an interest to speak, the second named representor will be entitled to speak if the first named representor is not in attendance five minutes before the start of the meeting.
- 4.3. Officers will introduce the application and advise Councillors on the recommendations.
- 4.4. Representors' views will then be heard in the following order: representative of the objectors and agent/applicant. Each speaker will be allocated three minutes.
- 4.5. Whilst objectors and the agent have a right to speak, applications will not be deferred because one side is unable or does not wish to be present.

- 4.6. Councillors will not ask questions of the representatives at the end of the address. The representor will then be asked to move back to an allocated seating area.
- 4.7. Officers will then be asked by the Chair whether they have anything to add by way of clarification.
- 4.8. The Committee will then debate the application (no more representors' views will be taken once the debate has started).
- 4.9. Representors will not have the right to speak or question the Councillors or Officers once they have made their submission.
- 4.10. Councillors will have the opportunity of asking further questions of the Officers and, if necessary, ask Officers to make a brief summary of the planning issues, at the end of the debate.
- 4.11. If the representors wish to present documentary material this should be made available to the Democratic Services Officer before 12.00 noon on the day of the Committee.
- 4.12. The right to speak will only be exercised at the first meeting of the Planning Committee at which the application is considered and will not normally be the subject of further representors presentations at any subsequent meeting.
- 4.13. Exceptionally, where significant changes have taken place after a deferral by the Committee, a further presentation may be allowed.
- 4.14. In the event that a representor does not get the opportunity to speak as a result of the deferral of an application (either by the Borough Planning Officer or at the request of the applicant) before it is presented to the Committee, their chance to speak when the application is referred back to the Committee for consideration will be protected (i.e. they will be offered the opportunity first).

5.0 Notes

- 5.1. Representors will be allocated space behind the area normally occupied by the Press and come forward to the end of the outer horseshoe (nearest to where the Democratic Services Officer sits) when speaking. A lectern will be placed in this position prior to the meeting.
- 5.2. The format of the revised agenda will include the following headings:
 - Section A: Applications on which the public are eligible to speak.
 - Section B: Applications which will be the subject of a presentation by Officers.
 - Section C: Other applications where no presentations will be made unless requested by a Member of the Council.

Public Participation at Planning Committee

1.0 Principles

- 1.1. The Council resolved to introduce public participation at meetings of the Development Control Sub-Committee which was brought into operation on 25 February 1997. The principles now apply to the Planning Committee which was established in May 2000 as a result of the introduction of new Council democratic structures at that time.
- 1.2. The number of objectors or supporters required before a planning application qualifies for public speaking at the Planning Committee is five (5).

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- 2.4. When considering an objection or letter of support:
 - 2.4.1. a petition will be regarded as one; and
 - 2.4.2. only one objection or letter of support may be submitted per household. Should more than one be submitted, only the first shall be considered.
- 2.5. In addition, the public will have the right to address the Committee on any of the following types of applications (see below) irrespective of the number of objections made:
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2.6. Council applications are also subject to the same criteria set out above.

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Applications which will not be formally presented to the Committee unless specifically requested by Councillors on which the public will not be invited to speak

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letters) then notification will be sent to all those persons advising them of their right to speak (in the case of a petition the first named person). The letter will be sent first class **no later than the Wednesday following the dispatch of the agenda which is normally received by Councillors on the Tuesday evening preceding** (also letters need to be sent to any objectors to major applications with less than five (5) (see paragraph 1.3. above) objections which are to be included on the first part of the agenda).

- 3.5. The current letter sent to applicants or agents has been revised, advising them of the date of the meeting and that they also have the right to make an oral presentation if objectors or supporters have given notice that they wish to make representations.
- 3.6. A list of the objectors and supporters (in all the categories where the right to speak exists) will be advised to the Democratic Services Officer together with details (and a contact number if known) of the agent or applicant.
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- 4.2. Where more than one person has registered an interest to speak, the second named representor will be entitled to speak if the first named representor is not in attendance five minutes before the start of the meeting.
- 4.3. Officers will introduce the application and advise Councillors on the recommendations.
- 4.4. Representors' views will then be heard in the following order: representative of the objectors and agent/applicant. Each speaker will be allocated three minutes.
- 4.5. Whilst objectors and the agent have a right to speak, applications will not be deferred because one side is unable or does not wish to be present.

- 4.6. Councillors will not ask questions of the representatives at the end of the address. The representor will then be asked to move back to an allocated seating area.
- 4.7. Officers will then be asked by the Chair whether they have anything to add by way of clarification.
- 4.8. The Committee will then debate the application (no more representors' views will be taken once the debate has started).
- 4.9. Representors will not have the right to speak or question the Councillors or Officers once they have made their submission.
- 4.10. Councillors will have the opportunity of asking further questions of the Officers and, if necessary, ask Officers to make a brief summary of the planning issues, at the end of the debate.
- 4.11. If the representors wish to present documentary material this should be made available to the Democratic Services Officer before 12.00 noon on the day of the Committee.
- 4.12. The right to speak will only be exercised at the first meeting of the Planning Committee at which the application is considered and will not normally be the subject of further representors presentations at any subsequent meeting.
- 4.13. Exceptionally, where significant changes have taken place after a deferral by the Committee, a further presentation may be allowed.
- 4.14. In the event that a representor does not get the opportunity to speak as a result of the deferral of an application (either by the Borough Planning Officer or at the request of the applicant) before it is presented to the Committee, their chance to speak when the application is referred back to the Committee for consideration will be protected (i.e. they will be offered the opportunity first).

5.0 Notes

- 5.1. Representors will be allocated space behind the area normally occupied by the Press and come forward to the end of the outer horseshoe (nearest to where the Democratic Services Officer sits) when speaking. A lectern will be placed in this position prior to the meeting.
- 5.2. The format of the revised agenda will include the following headings:
 - Section A: Applications on which the public are eligible to speak.
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

HS2 BROOKWOOD CEMETERY FUNDING TERMS OF REFERENCE

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 11 September 2023 the Committee agreed to form a Task & Finish Group on the subject of HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Funding.

Officers were instructed to draft Terms of Reference for the Committee's consideration and these may be found at Appendix 1.

The submitter of the scrutiny topic proposal was consulted to provide more information as to the purpose of the Group.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the general role and function of the Task and Finish Group be agreed, including those aims as set out in the Terms of Reference;
- (ii) the membership of the Task and Finish Group be agreed;
- (iii) the level of Officer resourcing to be requested be agreed;
- (iv) the number of meetings of the Task and Finish Group be agreed; and
- (v) the date that the Task and Finish Group is to report back to the Committee be agreed.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Toby Nash, Scrutiny & Democratic Services Officer
Email: toby.nash@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3056

Contact Person: Toby Nash, Scrutiny & Democratic Services Officer
Email: toby.nash@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3056

Date Published: 6 October 2023

HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Funding Terms of Reference

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At Appendix 1 may be found the draft Terms of Reference for the proposed Task & Finish Group on HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Funding ('the Group').
- 1.2 For the Group to meet the Committee is requested to agree several items:
 - the scope of the Group, i.e. the 'general role and function'
 - the Membership of the Group
 - officer resourcing
 - number of meetings of the Group
 - date by which the Group is to report back to the Committee.

2.0 General Role and Function

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to agree the general role and function of the Group.
- 2.2 For expediency, the submitter of the scrutiny topic was asked to expand on the intentions of the Group and these be included in the draft Terms of Reference.

3.0 Membership

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members with an interest in the topic and knowledge of finance be selected for the Group.
- 3.2 The Membership need not be contained to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.0 Officer Resourcing

- 4.1 The Committee may consider it appropriate to request Officer resourcing for the Group.
- 4.2 A member of Democratic Services will be available to help organise the meetings and submission of the final report to Committee.

5.0 Meetings

- 5.1 The Committee is requested to consider an appropriate number of meetings for the Group to sit if it is so minded.

6.0 End Date

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to consider a date by which the Group should report back to it any findings.

7.0 Corporate Strategy

- 7.1 The Task & Finish Group contributes to the 'Engaged Communities' strand by scrutinising an area of the Council's funding.

8.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

8.1 No budget has been provided for the Group.

Equalities and Human Resources

8.2 The Task and Finish Group will require some level of Officer resourcing.

8.3 There are no known equalities implications from this report.

Legal

8.4 There are no known legal implications from this report.

9.0 Engagement and Consultation

9.1 The submitter of the scrutiny topic proposal has been consulted on the report.

REPORT ENDS

HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Task & Finish Group

Terms of Reference

Adopted: [Month] [Year]

Introduction

The HS2 Brookwood Cemetery Task & Finish Group ('the Group') shall report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Significant changes to the Terms of Reference must be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Minor changes may be made by the Monitoring Officer.

Role and Functions

The Group was established to:

- Understand the purpose of the funding provided.
- Determine the status of the funding that was provided through the HS2 scheme.
- Review what funding is required to support the HS2 reburials at the cemetery.
- Understand the obligations on the Council towards the HS2 reburials at the cemetery.
- Understand the treatment of these funds under S114 status, if applicable.
- Understand the steps taken to date to ensure that funding will be available for the full duration of the original period identified by HS2.
- Seek views and make recommendations on the sustainable running of the HS2 reburials at the cemetery.

Membership

The membership shall be decided by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Membership of the Group shall be as follows:

[List membership.

It is recommended that you do not use names, job titles, or list specific organisations unless necessary. This is to limit the need to amend the Terms of Reference].

Quorum

The quorum shall be [the number of Members determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee]

Chairman and Vice-Chairman (and election thereof)

The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall take place at the first meeting of the Group.

Recommendations of the Group

It is expected that the Group shall reach its recommendations through consensus.

Meetings of the Group

Formal meetings of the Group shall be held virtually and serviced by Democratic Services.

The Group shall have [n] meetings. Should the Group require more meetings a request must be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings of the Group shall be held in private. Any recommendations shall become public once at Committee.

As the Group is private all papers shall be treated as confidential.

Any Council Member may attend as an observer and may, with the consent of the Chairman, contribute to the Group.

Outcome

The Group shall be expected to report its outcomes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

HOUSING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Executive Summary

This update covers the last two meetings of the Housing Working Group (HWG), held on 26 July 2023 and 4 October 2023.

July Meeting

At the meeting on 26 July 2023, the HWG received an update on homelessness. The team were experiencing unprecedented levels of homelessness, which had resulted in families staying in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for longer than 6 weeks. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Homelessness team had conducted a diagnostic visit and subsequently provided feedback on 14 July 2023. The feedback received from DLUHC highlighted the commitment of staff and relative success of homelessness prevention work, which stood at 75% compared with an average of 50%. However, it noted that staff and accommodation resources were stretched in dealing with the levels of demand. A B&B Elimination Plan had been developed. The Group discussed sources of Government grants and the possibility of empty homes in Sheerwater being used as temporary accommodation to help meet demand.

The HWG received an update on the Housing Service, including the self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing. It had been identified that the Council was unable to bring 137 homes up to the Decent Homes standard due to funding constraints and a time extension had been sought to achieve the standard. The Group discussed the focus on reducing void turnaround times, increasing rent collection and improving resident engagement across the service. A successful day of Tenancy and Home Visits had been conducted in the Lakeview area, with a further day planned in September.

The HWG considered the wider challenges faced with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which had been discussed at July's Council meeting. It was noted that if the HRA could not be brought into balance it would necessitate another Section 114 Notice being served. The Group discussed the approach to property disposals in order to bridge the capital funding gap.

Following the issuing of the S114 notice the group discussed how affordable homes would be delivered by the Council in the future as the Council would not have the funding to deliver affordable homes itself. The focus will need to be on securing affordable homes through the planning process and building relationships with housing associations.

October Meeting

Following discussions at the previous meeting around the Council's future delivery of affordable homes, Stephen Lodge, Executive Director Development and Strategic Asset Management at Abri (housing association), was invited to the HWG meeting on 4 October 2023. Stephen gave the HWG an informative presentation, covering the role of housing associations and their funding; challenges and opportunities facing the sector and further information on Abri and how they may assist Woking. It was noted that Abri and the Council shared many of the same objectives and aspirations for the community.

The HWG also received an update on the work of the Housing Assets team, including the ongoing dialogue with the Regulator for Social Housing and progress with policy development. The mutually agreed contract termination between the Council and Mountjoy was discussed. The Group were encouraged to hear that the Council had already secured 2 additional void contractor and a specialist gas contractor for communal boilers. Members requested an update on communal boiler issues before Christmas, after the outages last winter. The Group also discussed progress with fire safety

remedial works, properties that had been identified for disposal and the learning from the fire at Ash Road.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

- Background Papers:** None.
- Reporting Person:** Councillor Tahir Aziz
Email: cllrtaahir.aziz@woking.gov.uk
- Contact Person:** Councillor Tahir Aziz
Email: cllrtaahir.aziz@woking.gov.uk
- Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Ian Johnson
Email: cllrrian.johnson@woking.gov.uk
- Date Published:** 6 October 2023

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 2023

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECAST 2023/24 - QUARTER 1

Executive Summary

Attached at Appendix 1 is the Financial Monitoring Report received by the Executive at its meeting on 14 September 2023.

The report contains budget monitoring information and is included on the agenda for the Committee to review.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Contact Person: Eugene Walker, Interim Finance Director & Section 151 Officer
Email: eugene.walker@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3070

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Dale Roberts
Email: clrldale.roberts@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 6 October 2023

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT
BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECAST 2023/24 - QUARTER 1

Executive Summary

This report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget was set, based on the income and expenditure as at end of June 2023 (Quarter 1) and reflects the views of budget managers within the Council's Directorates.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the Council's forecast General Fund outturn position for 2023/24 be noted; and
- (ii) it be noted that the Corporate Leadership Team will continue to identify mitigations to enable the net expenditure for 2023/24 to be contained within budget approved by Council on 23 February 2023.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: Controlling the outturn within budget is essential to maintain financial control.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Eugene Walker, Interim Finance Director & Section 151 Officer
Email: eugene.walker@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3070

Contact Person: Ramesh Prashar, Interim Financial Adviser (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Email: ramesh.prashar@woking.gov.uk
Chris Randall, Interim Finance Lead, Change Programme
Email: chris.randall@woking.gov.uk
Chris White, Business Support Manager
Email: chris.white@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3225

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Dale Roberts
Email: cllrda.le.roberts@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 6 September 2023

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The 2023/24 Revenue Budgets and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for Woking Borough Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account were approved by Council at its meeting on 23rd February 2023.
- 1.2 On 7 June 2023 the Section 151 Officer issued a Section 114 Notice to the Council which estimated a General Fund deficit ('the Deficit') of £1.2 billion by 31 March 2024. This means that on estimates made at that time the Council required £1.2 billion of financial support to enable the General Fund to be balanced as required by law at that date.
- 1.3 An updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), covering 2024/25 to 2027/28, was prepared in June 2023 and a further updated MTFS report is also attached elsewhere on this agenda.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to set out the forecast outturn position for 2023/24 for the Council's General Fund. Future reports will be further developed to incorporate a forecast of Housing Revenue Account outturn and the Capital Programme together with progress in delivering the savings programme.
- 1.5 This monitoring report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget was set, based on the income and expenditure as at end of June 2023 (Period 3) and reflects the views of budget managers within the Council's Directorates.
- 1.6 As part of the ongoing monitoring process, work will continue to examine income and expenditure and activity data against the available budgets to support the position presented and help in updating and shaping the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides commentary on the Council's forecast revenue outturn position for 2023/24, which, for the General Fund, is indicating a projected overspend of £6.2m based on the information available as at Period 3 (June 2023).
- 2.2 In April 2023 the Section 151 officer suspended debt service charge into the profit and loss accounts of the companies: this was because the revenue charges were being financed by loans for capital purposes which is not permitted under the relevant regulations. For the time being, those charges will need of necessity to remain on the Council's revenue ledger; the alternative is to pass these charges to the companies, and it is likely that the companies would not remain financially viable if this action were to be taken. Notwithstanding this, in the absence of support from outside the Council, these charges will need to be invoiced to the companies by the end of financial year 2023/24 in order to prepare the Council's accounts.
- 2.3 The Council will continue to assess and refine the forecasts on a regular basis using the latest information available. The forecast presented in the report is based on the best available data and information acquired in discussions with budget managers.
- 2.4 Moving forward, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) will continue to engage with their respective management teams to identify available mitigations to suppress the service overspends. A line-by-line review of all service budgets is being undertaken by all budget holders to identify any savings to mitigate the overspend. The results of this will feed into the future monitoring reports.
- 2.5 By next quarter the Council will have also identified any impact in the current year of any possible early implementation of savings identified in the 2024/25 budget report also in this agenda.

3.0 Monitoring Frequency

3.1 Budget monitoring will be reported to Executive on a quarterly basis.

4.0 Forecast Outturn

4.1 The June 2023 outturn forecast is set out in the Table 1 and indicates a projected overspend of £6.2m.

Table 1

	NET BUDGET	FORECAST	OVER
		OUTTURN	SPEND
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Place	(3,888)	(2,090)	1,798
Communities	2,261	2,625	364
Corporate Resources	10,499	11,090	591
TOTAL SERVICE BUDGETS	8,872	11,625	2,753
Corporate Items	15,603	19,003	3,400
NET BUDGET	24,475	30,628	6,153

4.2 The key variations are set out in paragraphs 5 to 7, with an indication - where available - of the mitigating actions which are proposed or already underway.

5.0 Place Directorate

5.1 The key variations within the Place Directorate are set out in Table 2.

Table 2

	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Place Directorate	
Development Management	
The majority of the overspend in this area is down to unbudgeted temporary staff. The use of temporary staff is currently under review, and several temporary contracts are being terminated over the next few months. This will result in mitigating the projected overspend over the next few months.	100
Building Control	
Building Control income is currently below budget resulting in an adverse variance. This shortfall is forecast to continue for the year, although it could be offset if there is an increase in applications or a number of larger schemes moving forward. In the meantime, staffing resources are being reviewed as part of the 'Fit for the Future' programme to bring the Building Control budget back to a cost recovery position. 'In-year' fee increases are also being considered as part of the mitigation.	96

Financial Monitoring Report

Place Directorate...cont	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Leisure	
As a result of changes in service demand during and since the Pandemic, and cost increases in recent months, Freedom Leisure, who currently manage the Council's Leisure facilities on our behalf, are unlikely to be able to meet the full payments due to the Council under the Leisure Management Contract, with a currently projected shortfall of £126,000 (the full contract value is £813,000 this year).	126
Energy costs, which are the responsibility of the Council under the Leisure Management Contract, are likely to be over budget by £57,000 this year. Closure of certain areas of the building will reduce the overspend.	57
Parking Services	
<p>There are overspends on Business Rates of £55,000 mainly due to under-provision of budgets for Red and Green Car Parks. Electricity costs for Red Car Park have not been budgeted for resulting in overspending of £130,000. The forecast outturn for parking income is less than the budgeted target by £1.47m, though income from the first quarter is slightly above the previous year. Short term parking is just below budgeted activity levels, and longer term parking (more than 4 hours) is considerably less than the budgeted figures. In addition, customer parking durations are significantly shorter than originally estimated. The evening tariff is only 29% of expected levels, impacted by a lack of theatre shows. This is partly offset by additional estimated PCN Penalty Charge Notice income of around £290,000.</p> <p>Pending the car parking strategy due in November, options are being considered including closing off floors not currently used and exploring the closure of one of the car parks. The Strategy is expected to provide clear recommendation of maximising income moving forward.</p>	1,367
Environmental Health	
<p>There are overspends of £25,000 in employee costs. Estimated reduction in the number of inspections for animal welfare licences reduces income by £13,000. The recharges from Primary Authority work and Licence inspection enable savings of £15,000 to partly cover the overspends.</p> <p>The possibility of recovering the costs is being considered through using the Homes For Ukraine income to fund the time spent completing essential housing checks. Progress will be reported in the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring.</p>	23
Licensing	
There are overspends of £8,000 in employee costs.	8
Property Services	
<p>Surrey County Council vacated the Civic Offices on 21st April 2023 resulting in a shortfall of income of rents at the Civic Offices of £114,000.</p> <p>In year vacancies of £25,000 are forecast to contribute to employee savings.</p> <p>Due to the removal of the Town Centre Management Agreement (TCMA) reserve, there will be an overspend of £250,000 due to works which had already commenced such as the Chertsey Road works.</p> <p>Incubator Units overspend of £33,000 mostly due to prior years NNDR bills.</p> <p>Due to inflation a higher contribution has been received from Surrey Heath Borough Council of £9,000 towards CCTV. In addition, transmission maintenance is anticipated to be £6,000 lower than budget.</p>	357

Financial Monitoring Report

Place Directorate...cont	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
HIF project	
There are overspends of £20,000 in employee costs. We are seeking to recover these costs from Homes England. Progress will be reported in the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring	20
Other Minor variations	26
Total Projected Overspends	2,180
Mitigations	
Economic Development	
The underspend of £93,000 is mainly due to the cancellation of Celebrate Woking activities of £100,000, an overspend of £22,000 on staff not budgeted for and £15,000 underspend on the business liaison project.	(93)
Planning Strategy	
A Planning Policy post is vacant, and there are currently no plans to recruit to	(94)
Waste and Recycling	
There are overall savings of £145,000 from Waste and Recycling due to reducing variable costs in waste collection, increase of recycling credit and higher level of bin replacement as the bin stock ages. The lower take up of garden waste subscription offsets part of the savings.	(145)
Green Infrastructure	
A vacant post in Green Infrastructure contributes savings of £11,000. Additional savings of £41,000 are expected from reducing non-essential activities for tree, vegetation, and footpath improvement, holding off on works in repair and maintenance in play equipment. Expenditure for works for Biodiversity Net Gain can be offset by grants and fees from ice-cream licences thereby releasing savings of £22,000. However, there are a reduction in budgeted income of £16,000 on rent received for the mast in Sheerwater which has now been decommissioned, and a projected overspend of £8,000 on the corporate car club and car hire budget, which is the subject of a gateway savings proposal.	(50)
Total Mitigations	(382)
Total Projected Variance on Place Directorate Services (overspend)	1,798

6.0 Communities Directorate

6.1 The key variations within the Communities Directorate are set out in Table 3.

Table 3

Communities Directorate	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Women's Support Centre	
The Women's Support Centre transferred under TUPE regulations to Catalyst on 31.05.23. A one-off transitional subsidy was agreed for 2023/24 which has meant the FFF saving of £250k has not been achieved.	258
Housing Options/Needs/Enabling	
There is an overspend in Housing Options of £234,682 due to increased B&B expenditure and Fit for Future savings not being achievable. In addition, there is an overspend of £54,502 in Housing Options staffing budget and savings of £23,903 in Lets Rent/PSL team.	375
There is an anticipated overspend of £53,591 in the temporary accommodation budgets. This is as a result of expected overspend in responsive repairs, communal cleaning and electricity budgets. Funding of £229,912 to be received in August 2023 to help meet additional costs in 2023/24.	
The Let's Rent Private Sector Lease (PSL) is expected to overspend by £144,207 due to under-recovery of income and increased void costs. However, this overspend is expected to be partly offset by savings on the main Let's Rent budget and other staffing budgets.	
Total Projected Overspends	633
Mitigations	
The Junction/Richardson Centre	
These premises are used by the Women's Support Centre and all costs are now with Catalyst	(30)
Youth Development	
The Youth Development scheme ended in 2022 and the Council no longer pays this grant.	(44)
Home Independent Support	
There are six vacancies in this area, approval has been given to recruit to four of the posts and the saving is the net impact.	(112)
Brockhill	
Two staff left and posts will not be recruited to resulting in a saving.	(16)
Social Prescribing	
Two vacancies that are being recruited to and the saving is the net impact of posts being vacant.	(18)

Financial Monitoring Report

Communities Directorate..cont	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Community Alarms	
New NHS funding received.	(20)
Housing Strategy	
Savings in staff costs (Housing Strategy & Projects Officer) as part of the FFTF-2 savings.	(12)
Petworth Court	
Petworth Court no longer used resulting in a saving.	(17)
Total Mitigations	(269)
Total Projected Variance on Communities Directorate Services (overspend)	364

7.0 Corporate Resources Directorate

7.1 The key variations within the Corporate Resources Directorate are set out in Table 4.

Table 4

Corporate Resources Directorate	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Democratic Services	
Overspend on staff costs/salaries	23
Election Services	
Overspend on Postage costs, this overspend may increase further by the end of the financial year	50
Additional costs due to introduction of ID when voting in person	65
Marketing and Communications	
Marketing & Communications are reporting a modest net overspend from pay inflation offset by minor underspends on services.	11
Financial Services	
The additional costs are related to employing interim staff, partly mitigated by an underspend on Internal Audit.	153
Corporate Management	
The overspend relates to the costs of the Commissioners and the Interim Section 151 Officer partly offset by vacancies.	259
Human Resources	
Overspend of £46,000 on temporary staff, £90,000 on the graduate programme and £3,000 on subscriptions that are not budgeted for.	139
Other minor net variations	58
Total Projected Overspends	758
Mitigations	

Corporate Resources Directorate..cont	Over/(Under) Spend £'000
Legal Services	
Underspend due to a vacancy - Head of Legal	(77)
Underspend due to reduction in external printing	(65)
Election Services	
Saving arising from scaling back Civic and Mayoral events and services	(25)
Total Mitigations	(167)
Total Projected Variance on Corporate Resources Directorate Services (overspend)	591

8.0 Corporate Items

8.1 Corporate items include amongst other things the minimum revenue provision (MRP) and interest payable/receivable relating to treasury management activities. The Section 114 report highlighted that the Council as a result of prior year incorrect accounting treatment has no balances and in fact they are negative. The Council has moved from a budgeted position of receiving interest from short term investments on cash balances to paying interest on short term PWLB borrowing. This has resulted in a forecast adverse variation compared to the budget of £3.4m.

9.0 Recovery Improvement Programme – Funded by the flexible use of Capital Receipts

9.1 Table 5 gives a summary of the current estimated costs of the improvement recovery programme which totals £3.4m. The Council has an approval from DLUHC for the flexible use of £3.2m of capital receipts (which are contractually committed to be received by the Council before the end of the financial year) to fund the programme, which the current estimates exceed. A funding solution will need to be developed in order to deal with the additional costs. These include identifying potential future capital receipts which may be available to finance the costs.

Table 5

Activity Area	Estimate 23/24
	£
Programme	259,500
Human Resources	330,000
Companies	945,000
Procurement	100,000
Asset Management	350,000
Finance	770,000
Organisational Change	580,000
Corporate Centre	55,000
Total	3,389,500

10.0 Corporate Strategy

10.1 Budget monitoring is an essential function to ensure that the Council maintains financial control of its budget.

11.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

11.1 The financial or risk implications are outlined in the body of the report.

Equalities and Human Resources

11.2 There are no equalities or human resource implications arising from this report.

Legal

11.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12.0 Engagement and Consultation

12.1 None.

REPORT ENDS