

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

### TASK GROUP UPDATES

#### Summary

As an innovation for the current municipal year it is felt that those task groups which are part of this committee should give reports back if there have been meetings in the meantime. This does not have to be written but it is clearly better if it is to enable members to question the chairmen on any points of interest.

#### Economic Development Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Ian Johnson

The Task Group met in July. The primary focus of the meeting was the conclusion of the previous Economic Development Strategy 2012 - 2017 and the transition to the new version for the period 2017 - 2022. Simon Matthews, who had helped with the formulation of both of our strategies, assisted us with a transition paper which highlighted how the priorities dovetailed and how the new strategic priorities could be readily monitored.

Additionally, the Task Group discussed member concerns about the impact on local firms of a possible large scale private development in West Byfleet. Officers confirmed they would be happy to assist wherever possible and monitor any proposals.

The next meeting would be held on 30 October 2017.

#### Housing Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Ian Johnson

The Task Group received a presentation on the new Homelessness Reduction Act, which is the biggest piece of legislation on homelessness in 40 years. Changes to existing practices would require additional staff and team restructuring. Woking has a good record in avoiding homelessness but the legislation will require an even more pro-active approach.

Other issues discussed by the Task Group included:

- a consultation by SCC about Housing-related support due to SCC seeking to save money. The results of the consultation and any proposals by SCC will be known later in the year at which time WBC will need to consider the impacts on our residents and alternative ways of providing services.
- government policy shifts.
- improved compensation to tenants for boiler and heating breakdowns to reflect more fairly the additional costs incurred

- proposals for a new policy on service charges for leaseholder which was to be discussed by the Leaseholder Forum and would be reported back to the Task Group.

The next meeting would be held on 9 November.

#### Finance Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Graham Chrystie

The Task Group met on 11 July. The group considered the draft Statement of Accounts for 2016-17 which had been presented for audit. There was discussion on the movement in position since the previous year focussing on balances within the Council's Income and Expenditure account and the Balance Sheet. The level of reserves had increased compared to 2015-16, and there had been a positive outturn for the year as reported in the Green Book.

The group discussed the pension fund liability, exit packages, right to buy receipts and overall levels of borrowing.

The audit was due to be completed during July and the external auditor, KPMG, would report to Standards and Audit Committee in September before the final accounts were received by Council. The group would receive an update at their next meeting.

The group also received the Treasury Management Annual Report which was to be considered by the Executive later that week.

A report of debts written off in the first quarter of the year was considered with no issues noted, and the group reviewed the current rental levels of Wolsey Place which is presented at alternate meetings.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September.