

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
27 MAY 2020  
6.30 - 7.40 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Angell (Chairman), Virgo (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter, Temperton and Tullett Mark Glanville and Tracey Wright, Parent Governor representatives

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors McLean

**Also Present:**

Councillors Brown, Dudley, Ms Gaw, Kirke, Mrs McKenzie

**1. Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Angell be appointed Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for the Municipal Year 2020 – 2021.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Virgo be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for the Municipal Year 2020 – 2021.

**3. Overview & Scrutiny Panels**

**RESOLVED** that the establishment of three Overview and Scrutiny Panel be agreed and the core membership be agreed as set out in the agenda report.

**4. Minutes**

Councillor Virgo updated members that Councillor Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport was going to pursue amending the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) which did not permit the use of 30mph roundel road markings on roads with certain lamp column spacing.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 19 February and 10 March be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest made and no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

**6. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## 7. **Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

## 8. **Council Plan Overview Review**

Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive presented the highlights from the third quarter of the Council Plan Overview Report and it was hoped that the production timetable would be more closely aligned with the Commission meetings in future.

Members questions which had been submitted and answered in advance of the meeting would be circulated.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- the Chief Executive did not comment on the question raised re. the delay caused by the auditor of the Berkshire Pension Fund not being in a position to certify its accounts. He confirmed the Council's accounts had been signed off on 9 March 2020 and work was ongoing to ensure the same position was not repeated.
- the Chief Executive could not comment on the pressure currently faced by South Hill Park except noting that all performing arts businesses had been affected by the lockdown
- the Chief Executive advised that changes in the local housing allowance regime allied to the need to increase stock management had removed any obvious advantage to operating the stock via a private company such as Downshire Homes Ltd. Work was ongoing to find the most effective way to preserve the benefits the model had delivered by transferring the stock back to the Council. The stock of 60 properties included 2 and 3 bedroom homes which weren't suitable for single person occupancy but Thames Lodge may help with the bed and breakfast situation.
- the Chief Executive advised that the £3m to be invested over the next five years in the Southern and Western business areas would be raised through Bracknell Business Improvement District (BID) a levy on properties in the area.
- the sickness levels within Finance during this quarter were related to a small number of long-term absences.

## 9. **Work Programme Update**

The Executive Director: Delivery updated the Overview & Scrutiny Commission on work programme progress, noting the impact of the national health pandemic upon the four-year work programme and proposed amendments to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission's meetings programme.

Members acknowledged that the Council's resources were being focused on reacting and responding to changing national guidance and maintaining the Council's services.

Arising from the discussion that followed it was noted that:

- Policy activity across the Council was likely to be pushed back by four months
- Capacity to support reviews would not return immediately when services refocused on non-Covid19 related activities
- Live scrutiny was difficult to facilitate during the fast-paced situation as very few Executive decisions were being made. Elected Members were being

briefed twice weekly on operational level decisions which closely followed government guidance

- Proposed programme for the Commission recognised reduced resources available and focused on activity that would add value immediately e.g. Digital Access which had been critical during lockdown period
- Members were able to continue to discuss their ideas, but these informal discussions would not be supported by officers or able to be broadcast as public sessions
- Important that scrutiny was transparent and accessible to the public so the outcome of these discussions would need to feed back into the work programme in the future
- Discussions would be scheduled with Chairman and relevant officers to begin the recovery of the work programme.

The proposed changes to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meetings programme were agreed and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer would work with Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen and relevant senior officers to identify a realistic timeframe for recovery of the work programme.

**CHAIRMAN**