

# Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee

**Thursday 4 October 2018 at 7.30pm**

**Council Chamber  
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

## Members of the Committee

Councillors M J Maddox (Chairman), P J Taylor (Vice-Chairman), S L Dennett, Mrs L M Gillham, T J F E Gracey, N M King, Mrs Y P Lay, S M Mackay and P S Sohi.

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may attend the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

**(N.B. PLEASE NOTE, THIS MEETING WILL COMMENCE UPON THE CONCLUSION OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE MEETING)**

## AGENDA

### Notes:

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr J Gurmin, Democratic Services Section, Law and Government Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425624). (Email: [john.gurmin@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:john.gurmin@runnymede.gov.uk)).**
- 3) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk).

'see overleaf'

4) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

5) **Filming, Audio-Recording, Photography, Tweeting and Blogging of Meetings**

Members of the public are permitted to film, audio record, take photographs or make use of social media (tweet/blog) at Council and Committee meetings provided that this does not disturb the business of the meeting. If you wish to film a particular meeting, please liaise with the Council Officer listed on the front of the Agenda prior to the start of the meeting so that the Chairman is aware and those attending the meeting can be made aware of any filming taking place.

Filming should be limited to the formal meeting area and not extend to those in the public seating area.

The Chairman will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the Committee meeting.

## **LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **PART I**

#### **Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection**

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#### **Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.**

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. **FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

3. **MINUTES**

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 July 2018 (at Appendix 'A').

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

If Members have an interest in an item, please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Democratic Services Officer at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Democratic Services Officer at the meeting.

Members are advised to contact the Council's Legal section prior to the meeting if they wish to seek advice on a potential interest.

Members are reminded that a non pecuniary interest includes their appointment by the Council as the Council's representative to an outside body and that this should be declared as should their membership of an outside body in their private capacity as a Director, trustee, committee member or in another position of influence thereon.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or if the interest could reasonably be regarded as so significant as to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

6. **REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING SERVICE – UPDATE (CHIEF EXECUTIVE)**

**Synopsis of report:**

**As detailed within this Committee's Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2017/18, the Committee asked its Planning Service Review Advisory Panel to provide instructions to the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to carry out a Peer Challenge Review between 12-14 September 2018. This report seeks to update Members as to its outcome prior to receipt of PAS's report, due after the next scheduled meeting of this Committee but before the following scheduled meeting in November 2018.**

**Recommendation:**

**For information**

1. **Context of report**

1.1 As part of this Committee's Work Programme, Members asked that this Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the Planning Service. This report seeks to provide an

update to this Committee as to the outcome of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Challenge Review that took place between 12-14 September 2018.

## 2. Report

- 2.1 Members will recall that they were of the view that it would be helpful to instruct PAS to conduct a Peer Challenge Review of the Council's Planning Service and that having appointed an Advisory Panel (to whom any necessary powers were delegated by this Committee) consisting of 4 members of this Committee, that the Panel would meet with PAS to finalise the Scope of their instructions.
- 2.2 To ensure that the work of the Advisory Panel is beyond reproach, it was agreed that no one that sits as a Planning Committee Member in the current Municipal Year can be part of the Advisory Panel (due to the apparent conflict of interest that may arise). This Committee approved the following Members as forming the Advisory Panel:
- Cllr Taylor (Chairman)
  - Cllr Mrs Gillham
  - Cllr T Gracey, and
  - Cllr Dennett
- 2.3 Members of the Panel met with representatives of PAS prior to their recent visit to finalise the scope of their instructions. In essence, PAS were invited to principally focus on the following three areas to complement and inform this Committee's scrutiny review:
1. **Service Delivery** – Delivering the Council's Corporate Objectives now and rising to future challenges
  2. **Developing Best Practice for Community Engagement** – Looking at best practice for producing a new Statement of Community Engagement for both future policy making and the decision making
  3. **Member and Officer Working** – Identifying ways to ensure Members receive the support they want to deliver effective decision making, community advocacy and leadership.
- 2.4 On 12 September, the PAS team – consisting of two senior local authority planning Officers, a Conservative councillor peer, an Independent councillor peer and a review manager – arrived and, over the course of 3 intensive and consecutive days, undertook a series of interviews with Members and Officers from this authority, community groups, other stakeholders and users that engage with the planning service. The PAS team also attended and observed the Council's Planning Committee that met on 12 September 2018.
- 2.5 The aim of the Peer Challenge Review was for the PAS Team to act as a critical friend to review, advise and help the authority highlight what is working well and give any recommendations of practical improvements.
- 2.6 During the course of their work, they considered the core components looked at by all planning peer challenges:
1. Vision and Leadership
  2. Community Engagement
  3. Service Delivery
  4. Partnership Engagement
  5. Achieving Outcomes

2.7 Members will be pleased to learn that the summary of PAS' findings were positive. The headlines of their findings were:

- That there are lots of really interesting things happening – bringing opportunities for the borough
- That the Council has a good professional planning service performing strongly against measures
- That the Council has positively progressed its Emerging Local Plan under challenging circumstances
- That the national Housing Delivery Challenge is recognised by the Council and there are some core skills to build on
- That there are opportunities for more collaborative community engagement and also a significant opportunity to further develop partnership working moving forward, and
- There are opportunities for Officers and Councillors to work more closely together moving forward

2.8 These findings were presented to Members and Officers on 14 September 2018 on the basis that a final and detailed report will be provided to the Council in due course. It is expected that this will be after this scheduled meeting yet before the following meeting of this Committee scheduled for 29 November 2018. It is intended to bring that report to this Committee in November along with any thoughts on behalf of the Advisory Panel for further debate and review.

### 3. **Resource implications**

3.1 As noted at the last meeting of this Committee, there are costs involved in instructing PAS to conduct a Peer Challenge Review. Earlier this year, Corporate Management Committee approved a supplementary budget for £20,000 so as to cover the costs anticipated to be incurred by PAS. Upon receipt of their report, they will supply their invoice which will clarify the final cost of their work.

### 4. **Legal implications**

4.1 None

### 5. **Equality implications**

5.1 None

### 6. **Conclusions**

6.1 Members are invited to debate the body of work identified within this report and provide their helpful feedback to both Officers and the Advisory Panel.

### **(For information)**

#### **Background papers**

None

## 7. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

### **OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –**

**the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following report (s) under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report (s) in question would be likely to involve**

disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(To resolve)

## PART II

### **Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection**

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

4 OCTOBER 2018

## APPENDIX

<u>APPENDIX</u>	<u>REPORT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
A	MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2018	1



Runnymede Borough CouncilOVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE5 July 2018 at 8.26.p.m.

Members of the

Committee present : Councillors M J Maddox (Chairman), P J Taylor (Vice-Chairman),  
S L Dennett, T J F E Gracey and N M King

Member of the

Committee absent: Councillors Mrs L M Gillham, Mrs Y P Lay, S M Mackay and P S Sohi

145 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

146 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 April 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs L M Gillham.

148 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Further to the change in membership of the Committee this Municipal Year, further to the invitation of the Chairman, the Head of Financial Services began by advising the Committee that the Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18 was submitted to the Committee further to its responsibility for scrutinising the Council's Treasury Management activities.

The Committee considered the Annual Report on Treasury Management and Performance for the 2017/18 financial year. The Committee noted a full set of prudential and treasury indicators for 2017/18 and the economic background to treasury management. During the year the Council had complied with legislative and regulatory requirements and its Treasury Management Statement and Treasury Management Practices.

Members were advised that the Council's total borrowing activity stood at £356 million at the 31 March 2017, an increase of £119 million on the previous year; with all of the new borrowing assigned to either the purchase of investment properties or funding for ongoing development schemes like Addlestone One and Egham Leisure Centre.

The Council operated two "loans pools", one for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and one for the General Fund. All of the General Fund loans related to either the purchase of investment properties or funding for ongoing development schemes. The Committee noted the borrowing activity for 2017/18 and that the average outstanding loan rate for the HRA was 3.36% with the General Fund at 2.30%, well under the Council's target rate of 2.5%. The Council's actual investment income interest rate performance during the year was 0.79%, which compared favourably with the Council's benchmark rates; due to the Council's investment in pooled funds and the Funding Circle. Members were advised that this allowed the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash, without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. This offered enhanced returns over the longer term requiring a medium term view of each to be taken. Members noted the market value of these investments at 31 March 2018 and their returns last year. The Committee was

advised that the Council managed risk on a daily basis. Members sought assurances that an interest rate rise would lead to a revised investment estimate. The Committee was advised that it would as the estimate was under constant review; so should rates rise, this would be reflected in the mid-year report before Members at the scheduled October meeting.

Investment turnover was principally driven by the availability of counterparties that met the criteria set out in the Annual Investment Strategy, and the need to keep money invested in short term low paying accounts to meet large capital payments. The increase in investment rates and the additional money invested saw the Council's investment income increase from a predicted £221,000 during the year to £384,000 by the year end.

Members were advised that the management of counterparty risk remained the Council's priority and the Annual Investment Strategy was continuously reviewed to minimise risk as far as reasonably possible. The Committee was pleased to note despite the continued challenging investment environment, better than expected investment and borrowing rates had been achieved during the year.

**RECOMMEND that –**

**Full Council note the Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18.**

149 ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION 2017/18

The Committee considered a draft Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2017/18 (at Appendix 'E' to the Agenda) in accordance with sub-paragraph 6.03 (d) of the Council's Constitution which stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee must report annually to full Council.

**RECOMMEND that –**

**the Annual Report at Appendix 'E' to the Agenda be received and noted.**

150 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING SERVICE

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee was updated on the progress of the Review of the Council's Planning Service. The Committee noted that the report on this matter was the item that was referred to at item 8 of the Committee's main agenda for the meeting. The Committee had been advised at its April 2018 meeting of options available in respect of a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Challenge Review of the Council's Planning Service, having decided at its February 2018 meeting that it would wish to progress this PAS review as well as a scrutiny review of Planning.

In view of the demands upon the time of Members, the Committee agreed to appoint a Planning Service Review Advisory Panel whose remit would be to conduct the core work involved which would include meeting with residents and stakeholders for the scrutiny review following the PAS Peer Challenge Review, meeting with PAS to settle the scope of their instructions, meeting with key Officers within the Council's Planning service and seeking to identify the effectiveness of the Council's Planning service in accordance with particular criteria. The Committee agreed to delegate any necessary powers and functions to the Planning Service Review Advisory Panel as were incidental to the Advisory Panel's remit. The Committee agreed that the membership of the Advisory Panel would be

Councillor Taylor (Chairman), Councillor Dennett, Councillor T Gracey and Councillor Mrs Gillham. In order to ensure full cooperation of all interested parties, the Panel meetings would not be held in public or minuted but a summary of key points following each meeting would be prepared and approved by the Panel and reported back to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

The Committee noted PAS' current guidance to Local Planning Authorities regarding PAS reviews. Mindful of the priority given to submitting the emerging Council Local Plan to the Secretary of State, PAS had confirmed that they would undertake their review in the Autumn of 2018. The Committee noted that there were costs involved in instructing PAS to conduct a Peer Challenge Review. The Committee agreed that a request be made to the Corporate Management Committee to approve a supplementary budget in the sum of £20,000 to support the anticipated cost of the review which would cover the costs of a standard review plus any unexpected costs or any unforeseen issues that might require some extra expenditure to overcome.

Members highlighted the need for the Service Review to identify good practice and to specify where there might be any room for improvement in the service; being factual, disciplined and open minded. It was noted that there would be a need for assistance in preparing to interview and meet with both residents and stakeholder groups following the PAS Peer Challenge Review.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the establishment of the Planning Service Review Advisory Panel and its membership be endorsed;**
- ii) any necessary powers and functions be delegated to the Planning Service Review Advisory Panel as are incidental to the Advisory Panel's remit; and**
- iii) a request be made to the Corporate Management Committee to approve a supplementary budget in the sum of £20,000 to support the anticipated cost of the Review.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.09.p.m.)