

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report for Council – 22 February 2018

The December 2017 Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed:

- Shared Legal Services
- Impact and delivery of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Off-Payroll costs

The January 2018 Mid Suffolk Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft budget.

The February 2018 Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will review:

- Options to scrutinise an element of Waste Services
- Scoping of Five Year Housing Land Supply

Shared Legal Services Partnership: This has been in operation since November 2016 but there is no business case available to Members to assess whether the new service has improved delivery. The Committee asked to see a review in six months' time and recommended to Cabinet that no partnership working, or shared service takes place in the future without a full business case.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): Prior to Cabinet agreeing a Member working group to assess a framework for expenditure of CIL the Committee assessed work to date. Questions were raised about relationship between S106 and CIL; on communication with parishes; concerns with overall monies available for infrastructure and joint provider arrangements.

Off-Payroll Costs: A review of the costs for interims and consultants showed that, across both Councils, for 2016/17 a total of 98 positions will have cost £2.4 million and for 2017/18 to date 81 positions at a cost of £1.1 million. The Committee agreed to review this again later in 2018.

Draft Budget: On the General Fund there was detailed discussion on funding from business rates and Members requested that the budget papers included greater breakdown on this as well as capital financing charges, investment income and new homes bonus funding. There were questions on the increase in costs of 20% over the next four years, queries on pension contributions and cost of security at the old Needham Market HQ. Members also questioned specific elements of the Capital budget. On the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) questions were raising regarding the change to when BMBS would break even and how this would impact the HRA. Members were advised that the HRA was constantly being updated and a summary would be provided to Members when it had been next reviewed.

Waste Services: Members will be considering the current position of the joint waste contract, the recycling contract and new projects under review to see where the Committee can add value.

Five Year Housing Land Supply: A scoping exercise will be undertaken to assess actions being taken to improve this and how Members can contribute to this.

Forward plan: Items include reviews of:

- BMBS (Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services)
- the costs the office move
- the Transformation Fund
- staff welfare
- take-up of paid-for pre-application planning advice

Councillor Rachel Eburne