

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report for Council – 20 July 2017

The first Mid Suffolk District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting was held on 15 June 2017. For full details of all the discussions please see the reports and the minutes.

As this was the first meeting of the new committee, the meeting focused on what needed to be followed up on from previous reports, new ways of working, training and setting a forward plan. The committee also reviewed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan.

1.1 Follow-ups: Members asked for updates on the progress of recent recommendations and reports including the Fuel Poverty strategy (now incorporated into a Poverty Strategy); small and micro businesses; Neighbourhood Plans and the Waste Service.

1.2 Forward Plan: It was requested that, further to any outcomes from the above, a forward plan would include Voids performance, homelessness and usage of Bed & Breakfast accommodation (as requested by Cabinet), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) progress and a review of the Council's property services, BMBS. The Committee would also undertake pre- and post-scrutiny of items at Cabinet as necessary.

1.3 Training: Members were advised that training from the Centre for Public Scrutiny is being arranged.

1.4 Ways of working: It was noted that, under the new Cabinet system, an Overview & Scrutiny Committee is a legal requirement enshrined in the Local Government Act. The constitution states that it is "essential to enhance the accountability and transparency of the decision-making process". There is a duty to hold Cabinet to account and help the Council to improve the delivery of services by advising on the development of policies and assessing performance.

1.5 HRA Business Plan: A review had been done of potential savings within the 30 year plan and the importance of achieving these was stressed at the meeting. Efficiency savings of £300,000 were targeted in order to remain within the debt cap set by Government. Members raised issues regarding the relationship between the General Fund and the HRA, the debt cap, management of voids, the system of housing repairs and conditions imposed by Government. Members approved the plan but asked that a reporting structure on progress to targets be agreed.

The next meeting is 20 July 2017 at 9.30am.

Councillor Rachel Eburne