



Report to: Cabinet 12 September 2022

Lead Cabinet Members: All

From: Councillor Stephen Drew, Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Councillor Graham Cone, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Update from Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Purpose

1. This report is to inform Cabinet about relevant discussion among members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at their meeting on 6 September 2022.

Scrutiny at South Cambridgeshire District Council – a new approach

2. This report follows that of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 26 July 2022 and contained in the main Cabinet agenda
3. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee notes its work programme as a standing item at each meeting.
4. On 6 September 2022 Committee members noted four broad topic headings concluding in three cases to request scoping reports from officers to help more in-depth consideration at a future date. The fourth topic expanded on a motion passed at Full Council in July 2022 resulting in the establishment of a Task & Finish Group.

Comments

Relationships between the planning service and parish / town councils

5. This scrutiny review will be conducted in a way that builds upon the findings of the recent work carried out by the Planning Committee Development Group.
6. In identifying ways to improve engagement, it will be important to recognise diversity in terms of size and location of town and parish councils, demographics and so on.

7. Appropriate case studies will be considered, and a survey of parish and town councils might prove useful.

Plans for the efficient use of the space available at South Cambridgeshire District Council Hall up to 2026

8. Building on the investment put into South Cambridgeshire Hall and noting the impact on working patterns brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, this review will examine options for maximising the effective use of the Hall by providing a facility for businesses and private organisations. While security will be an important factor in agreeing tenancy arrangements, there exists a great opportunity to promote the work of South Cambridgeshire District Council and enhance its profile within the community.
9. There is scope for sharing ideas with Cambridge City Council as that Council considers its own options for benefiting from using its assets differently.
10. The recent installation of green energy measures at South Cambridgeshire Hall sets the building apart from many others and will be used to attract would-be tenants such as social businesses.

Engagement of the council with stakeholders across the district

11. This review will look at ways to engage with all residents, including those for whom face-to-face meetings are preferable to video calls, and those represented for example by tenant participation groups. It will also consider how best to communicate with those living in small communities with parish meetings rather than parish councils. Part of this engagement will be to communicate effectively the full extent of the District Council's powers. It will look at options for improving engagement with hard-to-reach groups.

Young people in South Cambridgeshire

12. Following Full Council's support in July 2022 for an investigation into how South Cambridgeshire District Council can improve democratic and service engagement with young people, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee has established a Task & Finish Group consisting of the following five Members:
 - Councillor Graham Cone
 - Councillor Stephen Drew
 - Councillor Sue Ellington
 - Councillor Helene Leeming
 - Councillor Richard Stobart
13. The Task & Finish Group will be able to co-opt others, such as a young person from within the District.

Future scrutiny

14. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee intends in the future to invite organisations (including charities, transport providers and utilities) to attend its meetings to inform Members about what those organisations do and to answer questions.

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