



REPORT TO: Cabinet 2 September 2020

LEAD MEMBER: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain, Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Councillor Judith Rippeth, Vice Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Update from Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Purpose

1. This report is to inform Cabinet of the discussions and recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting which took place on 16th July 2020, which Cabinet may wish to consider in its decision making.

Impact of homeworking on the Council

2. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a report which set out the impact on the council of moving to near 100% homeworking following the government lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Committee members found the data in the report very useful and highlighted the data regarding carbon reduction and the increase in productivity. They noted how well officers had transferred and adjusted to working from home and acknowledged that these arrangements did not suit everyone but presented a great opportunity for greater wellbeing for those it did suit.
4. Committee members thanked the Chief Executive and HR for proactively collecting this data before the committee had requested it.
5. The committee commended ICT for the support they had provided to staff and councillors.
6. Committee members requested that this review was carried out again after six and 12 months.

Shared Services Annual Reports and Partnership Renewal Agreement

7. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the annual reports for the Waste, Planning, ICT, Building Control and Legal shared services, which were noted.
8. The committee also considered the Partnership Renewal Agreement for 3C Shared Services and committee members indicated their support for this agreement.

Scrutiny Improvement Review

9. The committee considered the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Scrutiny Improvement Review report and recommendations.
10. Committee members highlighted the following from the CfPS' recommendations:
 - The suggestion to introduce summary reports to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which drew out the key points for the committee, instead of long and detailed reports.
 - The need for the committee to become involved at an earlier stage of proposals.
 - The need to focus on what value scrutiny could add and to focus on fewer items but look at these in more depth.
11. Committee members endorsed the CfPS' recommendations and the proposal that a Member workshop be held to consider the findings of the review and to engage in ideas for change and improvement. A date for this workshop, which will be led by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, is subject to confirmation by the CfPS. It is hoped that this will take place in September or October 2020.

Referral to the committee of the call-in of a decision relating to a potential property investment

12. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the referral of the call-in of a decision taken by Cabinet on 29th June 2020, regarding approval of a property investment.
13. Following careful consideration of the Cabinet decision and the referral of the call-in, the committee agreed not to refer the matter back to Cabinet or Council. The decision taken by Cabinet could therefore be implemented immediately.

Report Author:

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