

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 MAY 2024 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman), Cllr Christopher Williams (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Johnny Kidney,
Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Tony Pickernell, Cllr Pip Ridout,
Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr Robert MacNaughton

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Richard Clewer and Cllr Nick Botterill

21 **Election of Chairman 2024/25**

Nominations were sought for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Gordon King seconded by Councillor Jonathon Seed, it was,

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Graham Wright as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

22 **Election of Vice-Chairman 2024/25**

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Pip Ridout, seconded by Councillor Gordon King, it was,

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Christopher Williams as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

23 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jo Trigg and Gavin Grant.

It was stated that following the meeting of Full Council on 21 May 2024, Councillor Richard Britton had been replaced on the Committee Membership by Councillor Robert MacNaughton. The Chairman thanked Cllr Britton for his contributions to the work of the Committee and welcomed Councillor MacNaughton.

24 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2024 were presented for consideration, it was;

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2023.

25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

26 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

a) Briefing on the council's new Risk Management Policy

The Chairman thanked those members who attended the online briefing provided by officers for the committee on the new Risk Management Policy, on 14th May, with it noted that the new Policy had been approved by Cabinet on 7th May.

The briefing provided an overview of the process that will now be followed to manage and mitigate risks. It was noted that the slides and a video of the briefing were available on the Councillors' Hub.

b) Suggested Scrutiny questions

The Chairman drew attention that the agenda pack for the meeting included a new document on page 5, titled Suggested Scrutiny Questions. This was a list of standard scrutiny questions that could be applied to almost any topic that a scrutiny committee might encounter. It would be included for members' reference in all Overview and Scrutiny agendas.

The Chairman encouraged members to make use of the document and hoped it might prompt some questions that might not otherwise have been thought of. It was suggested that if the list was missing something, to contact a member of the Scrutiny team who would be glad to add further questions.

27 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted by members of the public.

28 **Corporate Performance and Risk Report 2023-24 Quarter Four**

The Chairman noted that on page 23 of the agenda pack, was a report setting out the quarter four update on performance against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan 2022-32. The report also provided a summary of strategic risks that might impact on delivery of these missions.

The report was considered by Cabinet on 7th May and given the breadth of the report, members were invited to submit questions in advance where possible.

The Chairman expressed that in view of the briefing on Risk Management, which was earlier referenced, members were encouraged to pay as much attention to the risk data in the update as to the performance metrics as this was a specific request from the Leader.

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council introduced the report and made the following comments that this was a revised approach to risk assessment and management by providing a greater degree of granularity and detail. The importance of the report was stressed as this enabled the Council to judge and assess risks as well as to understand how risks might be mitigated. Cllr Clewer drew attention to the scorecard element of the report in relation to young people, with it noted that this included sections of data which the Council had little control over as an authority, however such metrics were impactful on Wiltshire as a whole. Affordable housing was also discussed, with it noted that though there had been a dip in the delivery of affordable housing, it was expected that this would pick back up.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive also commented on the importance and role of the report.

In the absence of Cllr Jo Trigg, the Chairman asked officers questions which had been provided by Cllr Trigg. Written responses were verbally provided during the meeting by the Chief Executive as well as being attached to the minutes of the meeting.

The following comments were received by Members of the Committee including a query in relation to the banding system on the housing register and whether the register was reducing through people finding accommodation or through them giving up. Clarity was provided that the reasoning for bands was to enable the prioritisation of people with a greater need of urgency, for example those with medical needs. The notion of local connections enabling residents to be placed higher up the list was discussed, with it also noted that recently the register had been maintained with 10,000 individuals removed who did not need housing. The Leader also raised the issue of adaptable housing and how it was difficult to find properties suitable for adaptation. Work was being done with the housing stock to maintain possessed adaptable accommodation. Cllr Seed also spoke on the matter as former Cabinet Member for Housing, noting that there had been a Housing Needs Analysis Task Group, which had produced 13 recommendations for changing the housing register, which was due to be received through Environment Select Committee and the current Cabinet Member.

Regarding housing, a question was raised regarding how Wiltshire Council liaise with housing associations, with the point raised that GreenSquareAccord is currently set to sell 150 homes, which would reduce capacity. The Leader spoke on the matter, stating that it was frustrating that sales are not something that the Council can directly influence and that when such sales take place, often housing associations use the money to build new stock in another area, often going from social rent to an affordable rent in the new properties. In addition, it was acknowledged that though void times had been an issue, these were improving.

A point was raised in relation to the scorecard, where 79% of the 58 indicators had been ranked as either positive or neutral in terms of improved performance, however this therefore left areas potentially stagnating and at a risk to the Council. The Leader responded that the report included data and sensible metrics was a way of monitoring the indicators as well as providing a narrative as to why areas might be not working as they should. It was stressed that the purpose of the report was to produce helpful scrutiny and challenge rather than blame. In addition, the data would also be taken to Performance Outcome Boards (POBs) to be assessed at a granular level.

The element of the scorecard relating to the number of hectares of new tree/woodland planting was referenced, with it stated that the Council had fallen short of the 111-hectare target with 68.18 hectares achieved, though there had been a late flurry of activity in March 2024. The Corporate Director Place responded that in the last 18 months specific funding from DEFRA had been secured for the recruitment of a team who were now engaging with landowners for implementation. The team had also held many meetings with local champions for tree planting and that there was a programme in development. It was noted that a new funding programme had almost been secured and that all that was needed now was to find recipient land. Cllr Hubbard praised the new team who had been working on a project in Melksham Youth Centre and had provided an outstanding level of support.

Detail was provided on how there had been a successful reduction of households in temporary accommodation, including that preventative measures had been taken to avoid residents going into temporary accommodation initially as well as having a greater supply of temporary accommodation, therefore allowing greater flexibility for response. It was also noted that £10million had been released from reserves to buy various forms of housing to meet a variety of needs. There had also been an emphasis to get residents out of temporary accommodation as fast as possible as well as ensuring that B&Bs were not used.

A point was raised that the recycling rate seemed to be stuck at a low 40%, to which it was clarified that this number had risen from 40% to 42.8% through such methods as the "Lets Sort It Campaign" which had asked residents to be more careful with their recycling as well as bag searches at household recycling centres. It was also suggested that this figure would improve through new legislation, which would lead to Wiltshire having a separate food waste collection from August 2027 onwards as well as responsibilities for plastic

producers. The Leader also stated that recycling rates were based on weight, therefore such metrics should be taken with context. A discussion also took place regarding how there had been an increase in residual waste since Covid, with it outlined that enforcement in household recycling centres would soon be reported upon to produce data.

A further point was raised regarding food waste and whether the Council would be stepping up vermin control due to a possible increase in vermin due to food waste storage. The Corporate Director Place stated that the caddies provided for food collection worked well, with experiences of Somerset residents cited, with the lid firmly shutting to prevent entry.

A discussion took place regarding recycling not being picked up from the business community due to costing more through the Council than to privately arrange collection for landfill. It was agreed that if there was a way to incentivise small businesses to recycle their waste rather than using landfill this could be of benefit to both the Council and the environment.

A point was raised about a scheme taking place with the Primary Care Network in Chippenham to encourage men to receive NHS checks. The Leader suggested that this should be taken through the Health and Wellbeing Board and then the Integrated Care Partnership to push out positive preventative practice.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the updates and outturns against the measures and activities mapped against the Council's priorities.**
- 2. To note the Strategic Risk Summary.**
- 3. To ask the Select Committee Chairs to consider further scrutiny of the performance measures and risks within their areas as appropriate.**

29 **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24**

The Chairman noted that on page 57 of the agenda pack was the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23, which was considered by Full Council on 21st May.

The report provided a summary of the O&S function's work over the past 12 months. The Chairman thanked everyone who had been involved in Overview and Scrutiny over the past year; including members, officers, representatives of partner organisations and members of the public.

The following comments were received from Cllr Hubbard, who questioned the pictures of Councillors within the report, but also replicated the comments made

by the Chairman, stressing the value of scrutiny and the difference that it makes.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24.**

30 **Financial Planning Task Group Update**

The Chairman noted that on page 63 of the agenda pack was the standing update on recent activity by the Financial Planning Task Group. The Task Group had met once since the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, where it considered a number of items, as detailed in the written report.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group noted that the Task Group was now awaiting the year end outturn, which was clarified by officers as being reported to the July meeting of Cabinet.

Further clarity was also provided from officers that currently work was taking place to make sure that committee dates were aligned with the General Election, as the next meeting of the Task Group was set to be on 5 July 2024.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the update on the Task Group activity provided.**
- 2. To note the Financial Planning Task Group's forward work plan.**

31 **Management Committee Task Groups**

A report was received on the Task Groups and Panels established by the Management Committee.

Evolve Programme Task Group

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Task Group Chairman outlined that an extensive report had been included within the pack, however headlines included that the Oracle System was now up and running, with some rollout still to be completed regarding finance teams and budget holders; which had been considered in a report at the last meeting. It was stated that as the project was ending there

would be an opportunity for the Task Group to consider challenges which had been experienced, with a final report set to focus on those, including the procurement methodology and staffing issues. Praise was directed to Stuart Honeyball, Director Business Transformation and his team for a good rollout as well as credit for the Payroll team who had effectively completed two months' work in one month using both the SAP and Oracle systems.

Cllr Hubbard also raised a point regarding the current overtime policy of the Council and how there was not an incentive for people to work bank holidays. Lizzie Watkin, Director Finance expressed that this policy was currently being investigated and that the Director HR wanted to ensure that staff were incentivised and rewarded in the right way; however the right policies and mechanisms would need to be in place for this.

Stone Circle Governance Task Group

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Task Group Chairman outlined that the purpose of the Task Group was to look at future governance and scrutiny, however it was evident at the start of the process that most of the councillors involved did not understand Stone Circle as well as what information was available. Time was therefore spent investigating this which had led to it being determined what information was and was not available as well as identifying what was not being produced. Gratitude was placed to Democratic Services, who had provided support over a number of meetings. It was outlined that the Task Group now had most of the information needed and that some recommendations had materialised, with it hoped that there would be another meeting to decide on recommendations as well as a written response.

Cllr Ridout praised the Chairman for allowing this Task Group to exist and function separately from the Financial Planning Group.

Cllr Clewer also expressed that there was a Stone Circle Shareholders Group, which he wanted to be ran as openly as possible, with Members welcome to attend and submit questions from an operational perspective.

Transformation Task Group

It was noted that this was a new task group, with the proposed terms of reference set out in the report for Committee endorsement. Like with the Stone Circle Task Group, the objective initially would be to consider how scrutiny of the council's transformation activity should be conducted, therefore recommendations on that would be brought back to Management Committee in due course.

The Chairman noted that currently Cllrs Hubbard, Williams and himself were sat on this Task Group and encouraged anyone interested to join.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the update on the Task Group activity provided.**
- 2. To approve the proposed terms of reference and membership for the Transformation Task Group.**

32 Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the forward work programmes for each select Committee, as well as updates from the Chairman for each Select Committee.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Children's Select Committee provided an extensive verbal update as a written report from the Children's Select Committee had not been included within the agenda pack. The update covered that recently a productive meeting with the Executive had taken place to consider the Forward Work Plan, with consideration of trying to complete any ongoing work so that as little as possible would be carried over to the new Council and Select Committee. Work which would be carried over included the scrutiny of Safety Valve, which was a key priority of the Committee and had a standing item and report at each meeting. It was also stated that the Committee had decided not to start a task group on this. A recommendation was also going to be made to the new Committee to consider setting up a Safety Valve Task Group as well as scrutiny of the new Family Hubs. It was noted that for the rest of the year, work for the Select Committee included the scrutiny of children's mental health and placements.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the updates on select committee activity and approve the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.**

33 Overview and Scrutiny Remuneration Fund 2023-24

The Chairman noted that on page 97 of the Agenda Pack, was a report noting the application of the OS Remuneration Fund for 2023-24. The method of allocating the fund was agreed in 2018, with following activities considered eligible:

- Chairing active task groups, including standing task groups;
- Leading rapid scrutiny exercises;
- Vice-chairing Select Committees that do not attract an SRA;
- Representation on active project boards;
- Chairing active scrutiny panels.

The Chairman stated that he was pleased to see that the number of qualifying scrutiny meetings taking place is steadily increasing back to pre-covid levels. Additionally, last year it was agreed that the payment per qualifying meeting should be capped at £220 and this had been applied this year.

Cllr Seed questioned whether Members would be able to vote on the respective report if they had been mentioned within it, to which the Chairman clarified that the report was only for noting.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the allocation of the OS Remuneration fund for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 1.**

34 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 23 July 2024.

35 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 11.50 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ben Fielding - Senior Democratic Services Officer of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718656, e-mail benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee: 29 May 2024

Questions relating to the Performance and Risk Monitoring Report

Visits to Leisure Centres – Question from Cllr Trigg

OSMC Question:



Para 24. Visits to WC leisure centres increase. Are we seeing that across the area or focussed on newer facilities etc? Ability to understand increased type of activity eg swim/gym visit/class etc?

Written response from Justine Foster, Service Manager Leisure Operations:

15 of the sites grew in attendance last year.

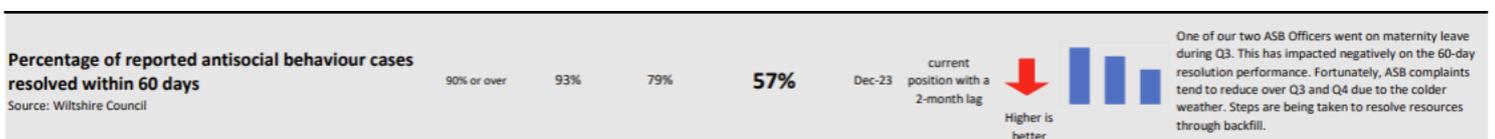
5 were slightly lower in attendance than the previous year – Devizes, Durrington Swimming Pool and Westbury Pool have had new competition opening up nearby which has had a direct impact; Devizes should recover following the health and fitness development that is happening this year and there is a plan in place to drive swimming lessons at the two pools. Trowbridge Sports Centre and Springfield Campus are the other two facilities that have seen a reduction in attendance.

The largest percentage growth was at Leighton Recreation Centre – a dry side only facility. A small investment in equipment both in the gym and for family activity along with the introduction of some Group Exercise classes has helped in achieving this.

The next largest percentage growth was at our newest facility Melksham Community Campus.

Across the year the biggest growth has been in Fitness Memberships, this membership offers access to the gym. Swimming and group exercise memberships have also grown throughout the year.

Antisocial Behaviour – Question from Cllr Trigg



OSMC Question:

Para 36. Staffing Shortages – ASB Officer. At Feb meeting I asked about ASB Officer Mat Cover vacancy and was told that having major impact but close to filling role. Looks as if we were unable to do that. Also that technical support officer had been seconded elsewhere. We are no longer able to rely on colder weather to reduce ASB incidents..... what are the mitigations/impacts?

Written response from Gary Tomsett, Team Manager, Environmental Protection, Antisocial Behaviour & Community Safety:

The new Public Protection Structure came into effect in March. Community Safety & ASB Team joined Environmental Protection under the management of Gary Tomsett.

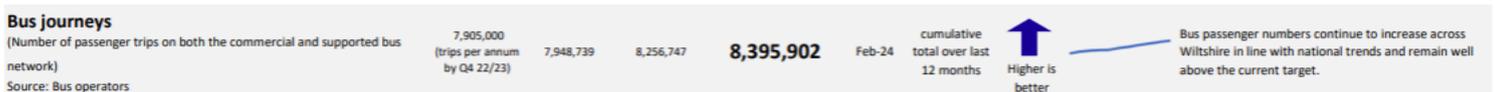
With regard to the current situation with the ASB team, an ex PCSO officer has been employed for 22.2 hrs per week to provide maternity cover through to December 2024.

There has recently been a bid submitted to the Enforcement Working Group for funding to extend this to 30hrs per week through to December 2024. We await the outcome of that bid.

The Technical Support Officer continues to work as a Dog warden. However, following a member of tech support staff retiring and another reducing her hours, a 21hr per week post was created. A member of CSU has been recruited to this post and she commenced last week. Part of her role will be supporting the team with respect to new working coming in via the ASB inbox.

Please remember all ASB reporting has a 60 day lag, so effect of staffing capacity will take time to show in the reported numbers.

Bus Passenger Journeys – Question from Cllr Trigg



OSMC Question:

Para 53. Bus Passenger journeys. Have increased. Am sure the £2 fare are having positive impact. At what point do additional journeys/routes become viable part of future planning?

Written response from Jason Salter, Head of Service, Passenger Transport Unit:

Passenger numbers across both the commercial and supported network continue to increase. The first slide below represent the increase in passenger numbers since pre covid on the supported network. The second slide represent concessionary pass holders usage which has largely returned as it will now, reflecting national trends and is unlikely to increase further at this point. The reduction in concessionary use is generally down to the fact that during Covid people found alternative ways of making essential journeys, or relied upon goods being delivered.

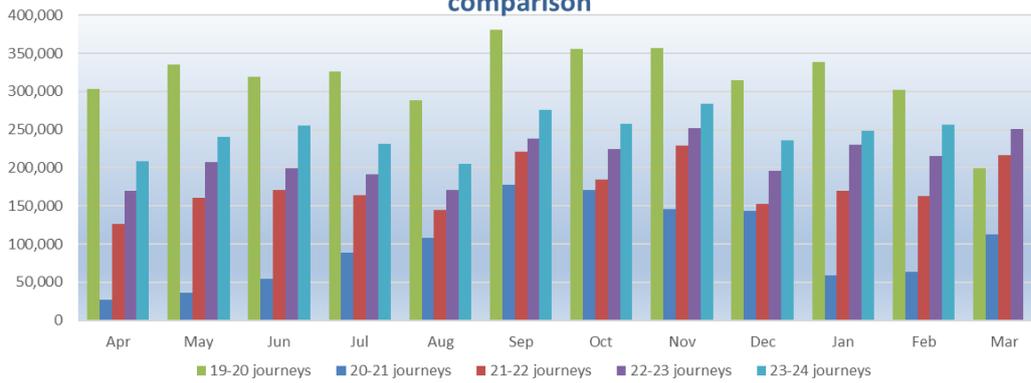
At the end of 2023 Wiltshire Council consulted on its future public transport policy, considering changed travel habits. As a result, we will be introducing a criteria by which we can rank the priority of bus services that Wiltshire Council should support based upon:

1. Cost per passenger trip
2. Whether a bus service serves population densities identified as low car ownership
3. Has links to rail stations
4. Whether a bus service serves an area with a recognised Air Quality Management (AQM)
5. Main journey purpose for that service

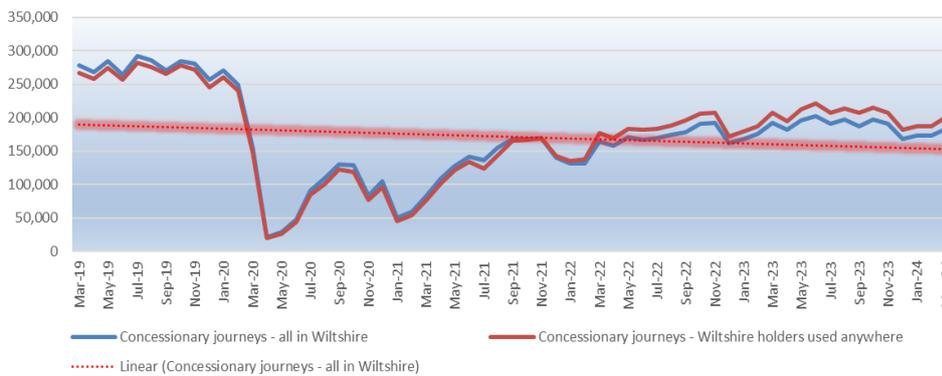
Officers are still in the process of analysing the outcomes of this tool and are set to discuss with the Cabinet member for Transport in due course.

It is unlikely that there will be a reduction in any bus service soon by adopting this approach.

Passenger journeys on supported bus services in Wiltshire annual comparison



Concessionary journeys



Risk issue on Staffing Recruitment and Retention – Question from Cllr Trigg

Staff Capacity: Recruitment and retention	<p>Some, but not all, service areas have identified that this has now become an issue, with there being a range of factors at play in different labour markets. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A smaller national workforce (less European immigration, earlier retirement/semi-retirement following the pandemic, increased numbers of those on out of work benefits) and closer to full employment. - Specific skills shortages. - Competition from the private sector and from other public sector organisations. - The impact of the increase in the cost of living making higher wages more important. - The cost increase of driving for those who have to travel in their role. <p>The result is that some services are now impacted by insufficient staffing.</p>
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OSMC Question:

Under risk/issues - staff capacity as below. Which services impacted and how is that affecting residents together with how managing expectations and communications?

Written response from Tamsin Kielb, Director HR&OD:

We have continued to face challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff in Adult Social Care, Families and Children’s Services, Planning and Legal and Governance and we have taken appropriate steps to mitigate these challenges. In line with the recently approved risk management policy this issue has been de-escalated to a strategic risk for ongoing monitoring.

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