

Harborough District Council



Agenda item 8 - Report to Council Meeting of 6 November 2023

Title:	Update from the following Committees and Panels since the last Council meeting on 18 September 2023: Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants (27 th September) Scrutiny Commission (28 th September) Constitutional Review (5 th October) Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Communities (11 th October) Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Performance (19 th October) Audit and Standards (25 th October 2023)
Status:	Public
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Lead Councillor:	Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Knowles
Appendices:	n/a

Summary

- i. This report summarises the activities of the various Committees and Panels that have met since the last meeting of Council on 18 September 2023.

Recommendations

1. That Council note the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

- ii. The Council Procedure Rules provide that Council will, at an ordinary meeting of the Council, receive a report from each committee and receive questions and answers on that report.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides an update for Council on the activities of committee and panels which have met since the last meeting of Council.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council's constitution provides at Council Procedure Rule 2 that ordinary meetings of Council will "*receive reports from the Council's Committees and receive questions and answers on those reports*". It is likely that the rationale behind this requirement is as a result of there sometimes being long periods of time between meetings of committees, which means that minutes are not approved and published for councillors who were not in attendance to review and ask questions about. By providing an update report and allowing Councillors to ask questions of the Committee and Panel Chairs in full Council, the Council ensures that there is timely oversight of the valuable democratic activity taking place within the Council.

3. Details

Executive functions

- 3.1. The Cabinet Sub-Committee (Grants) met on 27 September 2023 to consider applications for funding secured by the Council from developers under section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990. The Council can require contributions from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure if a need arises as a result of a new development taking place. These contributions are then held by the Council and allocated towards appropriate projects which are compliant with Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') requirements and meet the need which led to the contribution being sought by the Council.
- 3.2. Community organisations apply for release of funding and their applications are assessed initially by officers against published criteria. At this meeting of the sub-committee, four applications were considered with a total request for funding of £489,045.19. Two applications were approved in full, and two applications received partial funding awards. The total value of funding awarded by the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Grants) was £310k.

Non-Executive Functions

Constitutional Review Committee

- 3.3. The Constitutional Review Committee met on 5 October 2023 and agreed that the Monitoring Officer should proceed with the updating of the constitution to address inaccuracies, duplication and contradictions and keep all members apprised of progress in this regard in accordance with the authority delegated to her in the constitution. The updating process could only be implemented completed in one go due to the interconnected nature of the current constitution.

- 3.4. When undertaking the updating exercise, the Monitoring Officer agreed to identify any opportunities to develop and improve the Constitution. The Committee agreed that these opportunities would be considered by the task and finish group over the next four months with a view to the final improved version of the constitution being adopted at the next Annual Council.
- 3.5. The Committee agreed that all councillors would be offered a number of ways to contribute to both the shorter term updating of the constitution, and the longer term improvement of the constitution, but the favoured, and most efficient, method of response was via the feedback form.

Audit and Standards Committee

- 3.6. The Audit and Standards Committee met on 25 October 2023 and received reports in relation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review letter (2022 – 2023), an update on the progress of the annual audit plan and overdue actions, and receipt of the Audit Completion Certificate for the financial year 2020 – 2021.
- 3.7. The Committee was also advised by the Chief Finance Officer that he had received the Audit Completion Certificate for the financial year 2021 – 2022, which would be reported formally to a future committee. He also confirmed that, in accordance with the authority delegated to him at the last meeting of the Committee, he had signed and filed the Council's Accounts for the financial year 2021 – 2022, which were now published on the Council's website. The final matter mentioned by the Chief Finance Officer was that the external audit of the 2022/23 Annual Financial Report was not completed within timescale by the Council's external auditors due to work pressures which were impacting audit functions nationally – the failure was not due to any fault of the Council but the required notice was published on the Council's website.

Overview and Scrutiny Functions

- 3.8. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission met on 28 September 2023 and agreed the proposed work plan for the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels with the addition of one item to the Communities Panel for the 7 December meeting. It agreed that the Constitutional Review Committee should be informed that its view was that the Scrutiny Commission should not be retained. Rather, the Council should have the ability to convene 3 Overview and Scrutiny Panels if this was considered necessary. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission was content that the constitutional responsibilities currently discharged by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission could be transferred to the chairmen of the panels acting jointly.
- 3.9. The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel met on 11 October 2023 and considered its work plan and received a report in relation to the Community Safety Action Plan.
- 3.10. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Panel met on 19 October 2023 and considered its work plan and considered the Climate Emergency Annual Report.

4. Implications of Decisions

Corporate Priorities

- 4.1. The Council is committed to delivering its corporate priorities as set out in its corporate plan. Providing the information contained within this report gives assurance that the Council continues to work to deliver these priorities.

Consultation

- 4.2. This report reflects the activity of the committees, which all members were entitled to attend. No further consultation is required.

Financial

- 4.3. This report provides an update on the work of the committees and has no financial consequences for the budget set by the Council.

Legal

- 4.4. This report provides an update on the work of the committees and ensures the committees comply with the requirement to report their activity to Council as set out in the Council Procedure Rules.

Environment Implications

- 4.5. This update report does not impact upon the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon.

Risk Management

- 4.6. The contents of this report do not pose any risk implications for the Council as it provides an update on the work of a committee.

Equalities Impact

- 4.7. The Council has a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate equalities impact in all of its activities. However, the report does not directly impact upon the public sector equality duty given it reports the activities of a committee.

Data Protection

- 4.8. This report contains no private information.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. Council is invited to note the democratic activity since the last meeting of Council as set out in this report.

6. Background papers

- 6.1. None

