

Committee	ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Date	9th May 2022
Agenda Item	4

District Councillor Report

Full Council Meetings

I have attended seven out of the eight Full Council meetings during the year. Last meeting was the AGM where Cllr Andrew Hensman was elected as the new Chairman and Dianne Garrod was elected Vice Chairman.

Leadership Team

The previous year has seen the retirement of Chris Fleetham, corporate director after many years of dedicated service. I was part of the interview panel who recruited Chris's replacement who is Suzanne Bennett. In addition, Andy Wright, Chief Executive, announced his forthcoming retirement – the formal process has been launched to recruit Andy's replacement.

Performance Management Board

I have chaired all of the seven Performance Management Scrutiny Committee meetings held during the year. The main topic for last year was scrutiny of commercialisation at BDC. The committee received excellent support and evidence from James Sinclair, Commercialisation Manager. The committee concluded by making a number of recommendations which will now be reviewed by the cabinet and then reported to full council.

In addition, the committee scrutinised the Investment and Development Plan. There was found to be a solid process and plan in place with many wide-ranging initiatives being pursued to increase income and reduce cost.

Scrutiny of the budget this year was conducted over three meetings instead of the normal two meetings. The process was more complicated this year due to delays in the release of government spending information. The budget incorporated improvements which reduced the overall four-year shortfall. It also included a much needed and significant increase in funding for planning enforcement and funding to support resources for implementation of the Climate Change and Cycling strategies. The council tax increase for 2022/23 was set at 2.68%. Unfortunately, the council tax surplus will not be paid back to town and parish councils in 2022/23.

For the forthcoming year I have put forward the scrutiny topic of S106 expenditure which is under review.

Councillors Grant Scheme

In 2021/22 I have awarded the following grants from my scheme allowance

Empire Trust - £ 550 – Autism Cinema

Halstead Day Centre - £ 300 – Christmas dinner for members

EC2K - £ 500 – provision of public right of way for cycle route

Salvation Army - £ 500 – Christmas meals

Halstead Public Realm Improvement Project

Unfortunately, this project has not progressed at the pace expected after a relaunch early in 2021. However, the cabinet have now approved the project to go ahead to the sourcing stage so it's hoped progress will be made in 2022.

Recommendation: that HTC members note this report.

Cllr. Mick Radley

Braintree District Council

Halstead St Andrews Ward