

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
20th November, 2009**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Swift.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyes, Gilding, J. Hamilton and License.

The Chairman and Councillor P. A. Russell referred to the Macmillan Coffee Morning fundraising event taking place in the Town Hall and it was agreed by members and officers that each would make a contribution to the fundraising event for the drink served during the meeting.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

95. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

96. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report which showed the Council's most significant risks and a summary of how they were being managed.

The reporting format had two key features:-

- An 'at a glance' picture showing the pattern of risk assessments for corporate priorities or projects both before and after risk management actions
- A more detailed summary of the risk register that reflected the current risk assessments for each corporate priority or project as at 30th September, 2009.

Changes to the previous style of presenting information and the significant changes to the register since the previous report were outlined.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- level of attention given to risks
- requests for information from scrutiny panels
- safeguarding children

- comparisons with previous reports
- level of information contained in the reports

Resolved:- (1) That the updated corporate risk register be noted.

(2) That reports on specific risks be submitted to respective scrutiny panels, as appropriate.

97. THE POST OFFICE DEBATE

Ben Knight, Scrutiny Adviser, presented the submitted report on feedback from the North of England 'Post Office Debate', a meeting organised by the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters (NFSP) in Leeds on 5th November, 2009.

The meeting addressed how local and central government and other stakeholders across the north could work better with local post offices for mutual benefit and help ensure that the post office network had a sustainable and vibrant future to continue to provide local access to vital banking, Government, mail/retail services, individuals and small businesses in urban and rural areas alike.

The report covered the Panel membership and a précis of contributions from Panel members.

Also submitted was the NFSP document "Six Steps to a Sustainable Post Office Network".

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- concern at reports of post offices being required to issue fifty pound notes in benefit/pension payments, particularly with regard to the more vulnerable adults
- proposed range of Council payments and services which citizens could undertake at their local post offices and feasibility of such
- justification for ongoing post office closures
- Free Enterprise Zones in town centres
- services taken away from post offices

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted on the feasibility of post offices being able to provide the proposed Council Services /payment facilities as

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now reported. Such report to include services taken away from post offices.

(3) That clarification be sought regarding the alleged practice of post offices being required to issue fifty pound notes as part of benefit/pension payments, with a view to appropriate representations being made to M.Ps.

98. THE FUTURE OF SCRUTINY - TACKLING THE BIG ISSUES

Ben Knight, Scrutiny Adviser, presented the submitted report on feedback from the Local Government Association/Centre for Public Scrutiny conference entitled "The Future of Scrutiny - Tackling the Big Issues" held in London on 30th October, 2009.

Councillor Les Lawrence (Chair, LGA Safer Communities Board) introduced the conference and the following presentations were given:-

- "Councils Leading Communities : Tackling the Big Issues Locally" by Dr. Phyllis Starkey, M.P. (Chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee)
- "The Role of Councils in Tackling Crime and Disorder" by Clare Checksfield (Deputy Director of Home and Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister's Delivery Unit)
- "Councils Tackling Local Health Problems" by Mike Grady (Senior Research Associate, Marmot Review Team, University College, London)
- "CAA Success – the Role of Scrutiny" by Tim Young (Associate, Centre for Public Scrutiny)

Issues covered included:-

- Rebalancing
- Recession and Economic Climate
- Future of Scrutiny
- Policy Goals
- Challenges for Overview and Scrutiny
- Cross Cutting Challenges on Health Inequalities
- Opportunities to develop the Overview and Scrutiny Role
- Local Government Association Key Messages
- New Agenda for Scrutiny

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

99. YORKSHIRE SOUTH TOURISM

Further to Minute No. 63(e) of the meeting of this Committee held on 25th September, 2009, Bronwen Moss, Scrutiny Adviser, presented the submitted report updating Members of the second meeting of the Yorkshire South Tourism Joint Scrutiny Panel held in Barnsley on 23rd September, 2009. The minutes of the meeting were submitted.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- funding arrangements
- linkage of the Joint Scrutiny Panel to the Council's Tourism Panel and Tourism Forum
- value for money and monitoring of Yorkshire South Tourism
- reporting of future minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel be received.

(3) That future minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation.

100. MINUTES

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November, 2009 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That a letter of thanks be sent to the Youth Cabinet for their contribution to another rewarding and successful 11 Million Takeover Day event.

101. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee report as follows:-

(a) Councillor Whelbourn reported congratulations on the Council's achievement of excellent level in the equality framework for local government. The first in the country.

(b) Councillor McNeely reported that the next meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel was expecting to consider:

- Cabinet response to the Choice Based Lettings and Voids scrutiny review
- allocations policy and empty properties

- interest for participation in the review of neighbourhood management

(c) Councillor Austen reported :

- there had been the first scoping meeting regarding the Devolved Budgets review
- protocols for the Crime Reduction Partnership had been developed

(d) Councillor Jack reported that the latest meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- a presentation on the Personalisation Agenda
- a presentation on the Rotherham Community Health Service
- a presentation on the Annual Report of the Joint Learning Disability Service
- progress of performance clinics into Joint Disability Scheme

(e) on behalf of Councillor Boyes it was reported that the latest meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- a presentation on the Chesterfield Canal Trust with a view to inclusion in the Rotherham Local Development Framework
- proposals for changes to Streetpride's target response times for a range of work

It was also reported that, following the above meeting, Councillor Boyes had attended a special meeting of the Yorkshire South Tourism Board in Sheffield regarding plans and governance for the future development of tourism in the region and sub-region.

(f) on behalf of Councillor G. A. Russell it was reported that the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel would consider:-

- sexual health
- teenage pregnancy strategy
- update on support for English as additional language learners
- Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan

It was also reported that the Personal, Social, Health Economic Education curriculum review was going well.

102. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call in requests.