

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham. S60
2TH

Date: Friday, 25 March 2011

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press.

For Discussion/Decision:-

6. The Role and Functions of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham - Future Arrangements (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 3)

For Information/Monitoring:-

7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th March, 2011 (herewith) (Pages 4 - 8)
8. Work in Progress (Chairs of Scrutiny Panels to report)
9. Call-in Issues - to consider any issues referred for call-in.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT

1. Meeting:	Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee
2. Date:	25 March 2011
3. Title:	The role and function of overview and scrutiny in Rotherham: future arrangements
4. Directorate:	Chief Executive's All wards

5. Summary

The report sets out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into the role and function of overview and scrutiny in Rotherham and its future arrangements. The full draft report will be considered at this meeting.

6. Recommendations

- a. That PSOC endorse the report's findings and recommendations.
- b. That PSOC forward the report to Cabinet for its consideration.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 As part of its 2010/11 work programme, Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee set up a review group to examine the role and function of scrutiny in Rotherham in light of the changing local government landscape.

7.2 PSOC received a presentation at its meeting of 11 March 2011. The presentation outlined:

- Why the review was undertaken
- Process
- Emerging issues
- Recommendations
- Options for future arrangements

7.2.1 PSOC Members endorsed the findings and emerging recommendations from the review. With respect to future arrangements, PSOC supported Option 2.

7.2.2 The supporting evidence was gathered through a comprehensive exercise which included

- Desktop review to explore best practice models
- Questionnaires circulated to **all** Members and key officers
- Focus groups with PSOC Members, O&S members, co-optees and partners
- Structured interviews with Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors conducted by Professor Heather Campbell and Dr Matthew Gebhardt, University of Sheffield
- Presentation and evidence from Jessica Crowe, Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny

7.3 Issues emerging from the review

7.3.1 With very few exceptions, Overview and Scrutiny is seen to be a valuable part of the governance arrangements of the Council and has widespread support from both Members (Executive and non-Executive) and officers. However, there was a strong view that scrutiny needs to be different both in approach and its arrangements.

7.3.2 PSOC agreed in principle that this should be achieved through:

- Council agreeing a shared understanding of the role and function of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham;
- A greater focus on those areas where scrutiny can make the greatest impact;
- A greater emphasis on advance planning of scrutiny's work programme to enable scrutiny to look at borough-wide priorities and examine key issues, with clear links to corporate processes and decision-making cycles;

- An improved dialogue between Scrutiny, the Cabinet and Strategic Leadership Team about respective roles and responsibilities;
- Ensuring that scrutiny can respond to major service and structural changes e.g. NHS reforms, Localism Bill and the emerging transparency/self-regulation agendas, focusing outwardly and not just on the Council;
- Building on what works- scrutiny reviews are widely recognised as having impact and adding organisational value but future work should be more focussed and timely;
- Responding to financial, staffing and other resource constraints; leaner structures, with fewer panel meetings;
- Ensuring that scrutiny reflects and articulates the public voice;
- Supporting members to undertake this 'new' scrutiny confidently and effectively through the Member Development Programme

8. Finance

Should the recommendations be accepted, the changes to scrutiny structures arising from this paper will make savings. These have yet to be costed but are likely to mean greater efficiencies in the use of officer resources, fewer formal meetings and a reduction in the associated production and distributions costs for agendas. Should Option 2 be implemented, direct officer support to the Scrutiny Members can be met through existing staffing resources located in Scrutiny Services.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

9.1 Given that the review recommends a new approach to overview and scrutiny, it is suggested that the effectiveness of these arrangements are reviewed in 12 months to judge if they are fit for purpose.

9.2 The Local Government landscape has changed beyond recognition since 2010. Like other areas of the Council, scrutiny needs to demonstrate relevance and impact but in the context of fewer resources. If scrutiny does not respond to this agenda and change its approach and arrangements, it will undermine its capacity to provide value for money and undertake effective scrutiny both within the Council and externally.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

See full report

11. Background Papers and Consultation

All members were invited to contribute through questionnaire, focus groups and interviews

Focus groups were held with partners and co-optees

Key officers' views sought through interview and questionnaire

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PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
11th March, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, License, P. A. Russell, Steele and Swift.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor McNeely) and Councillors G. A. Russell and Whysall.

139. COUNCILLOR G. A. RUSSELL

The Committee wished Councillor Russell a speedy recovery following her recent operation.

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

141. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

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

142. CENTRAL ESTABLISHMENT CHARGES

Joe Johnson, Principal Accountant, presented the submitted paper updating the Committee on progress regarding the review of central establishment charges.

The paper covered:-

- explanation of central establishment charges
- need, under the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice, for the charges to be allocated to services in order for them to reflect the true cost of a service
- scope of the review
- review objectives
- current central establishment charges recording/processing systems and their application
- timescales for completion of the review

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

- implications for contract/tender bids
- consultation with directorates
- IKEN system

- potential for a scrutiny review of central establishment charges
- need to widen the scope of the review
- funding options instead of applying charges

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

(2) That Cath Saltis and Joe Johnston liaise regarding the possible need to widen the scope of the review.

(3) That a further report be submitted in August/September upon completion of the outstanding work, such report to include options, where possible, for better ways of working.

143. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Chairman welcomed Jessica Crowe, Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny, who gave a presentation entitled "Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham – Setting the Scene".

The presentation covered:-

- the changing landscape for local government
 - there's no money
 - Big Society
 - Self Regulation
 - web of accountability
 - what does it all mean for scrutiny?
- there's no money : it's all about the cuts
- levels of public trust are key
- "Big Society" – what does it mean
- What does it all mean for councillors and democracy
- Self-Regulation : who will be shining light on poor performance
- LGG self-regulation framework : key role for scrutiny
- Scrutiny – part of a wider web of accountability
- What does it all mean for scrutiny?
- essentially scrutiny needs to move from the committee room to the wider network
- innovative scrutiny works! – Warrington cemetery scrutiny review

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

- financing, staffing and costs of the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- cuts programme not generally supported by the public
- concerns regarding the costs of involving the wider community at a time when cuts were being made
- “Big Society” and the role for Scrutiny
- scrutiny of big business
- elected members as an untapped resource gaining knowledge from others
- awareness of what was going on in the Council and need to be focused/organised in choosing what to look at
- value for money

Resolved:- That Jessica be thanked for an informative and interesting presentation.

144. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - EMERGING FINDINGS

Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, gave a presentation entitled ‘Role and Function of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham – Future Arrangements’ regarding the above review undertaken by the working group.

The presentation covered:-

- Why we did the review
- Process
 - horizon scanning
 - revisiting Centre for Public Scrutiny self-evaluation
 - explore other models
 - questionnaires – all members and relevant officers
 - focus groups
 - input from University of Sheffield
- Questions
- Emerging Issues
 - scrutiny is valued but widespread view that it needs to be different
 - So what? What is impact and added value of panels?
- Recommendations
- Options for future arrangements and their benefits and risks:

- Timetable
 - Final report - PSOC 25th March, 2011
 - Cabinet - 6th April, 2011
 - Council - 20th April, 2011
 - Any new arrangements to be adopted May, 2011

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

- scrutiny very successful in Rotherham and working from a good base but need to recognise the changing agenda
- essential need for increased dialogue with the Executive and partners
- essential for elected members to be active participants in the scrutiny process
- need to determine the way forward to improve the ability to scrutinise
- building on existing processes versus starting with a blank page
- possible alternative structure incorporating public accounts, public administration and scrutiny overview committees
- the model in Option 2 recommends a single health scrutiny function across all age groups
- need to plan ahead and not necessary to have the same approach for everything
- sharing resources with other local authorities
- options appraisal

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and the emerging recommendations be endorsed in principle;

(2) That a final report be submitted to this Committee on 25th March, 2011 based on a structure as identified in Option 2 of the presentation now received.

145. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February, 2011 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

146. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) The Chairman on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor McNeely) reported that the latest meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel had reiterated a previous request that the effects of staff changes on services should be detailed to all Council Members.

Resolved:- That service areas be requested to provide details of the effects of any staff changes on services to all Members of the Council to facilitate awareness of the overall picture and not just the area covered by the respective scrutiny panels.

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

- Assistive Technology Review update
- Public Health White Paper consultation
- Winter Pressures
- Diabetes testing (practical session)

The next meeting would be considering keeping warm in later life.

(c) Councillor Austen reported that the latest meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel had been themed on community cohesion, connecting communities and equalities.

(d) Caroline Webb reported that the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel was involved in the consultations on reconfiguring children's cardiology services and the reshaping of children's centres.

147. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.