

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
27th April, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Gilding, J. Hamilton, License and Whysall.

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

163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

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

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

165. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report which showed the Council's most significant risks and 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

Changes to the register since the previous report were outlined.

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

- future Corporate Risk Register reporting arrangements
- unknown risks and business continuity
- Civic Building accommodation and costs
- Local Government Reform Implementation Plan
- future reporting arrangements regarding implications of the Localism Bill
- connections with the Voluntary Sector and Parish Councils' network
- work of the established Project Steering Group
- Community Stadium commencement of work

- Highway Maintenance : level of national funding

Resolved:- That the updated Corporate Risk Register summary, attached at Appendix A to the report, be noted.

166. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

It was reported that the new scrutiny arrangements would be effective from the Annual Council Meeting on 20th May, 2011 and the Constitution was being amended accordingly.

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

- importance of establishing a proposed way of working
- need for a settling in period initially for the new arrangements
- potential need for an away day session to discuss the work plans
- need to implement regular meetings with Cabinet

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

167. REWRITING THE SCRIPT : PREPARING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FOR THE " NEW LOCALISM"

Deborah Fellowes, Policy Manager, reported feedback from the above London conference.

The morning session had focused on the following key issues:-

- How would the Government agenda for public service provision affect local political accountability?
- What was the likely impact on Overview and Scrutiny?
- How might Overview and Scrutiny respond to the new challenges?
- What scrutiny skills were needed for these tough times?

The following issues were felt to be particularly relevant to Rotherham:-

- impact of the large number of providers of service across different sectors that were likely to be generated as a result of the Localism Bill, referred to as a 'plurality of providers'. There were clear implications for scrutiny in terms of monitoring and assessing the impact
- relevance of self regulation and sector based assessment

Rotherham's own review of scrutiny had been presented by Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, as an example of an authority already looking at and responding to the above issues. The presentation was well received by the Conference and showed Rotherham in a positive light.

Workshops in the afternoon focused on the implications of the Localism Bill for scrutiny in individual authorities. Key issues for Rotherham were the implications of the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Police and Crime Panels.

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

- holding to account client officers or providers
- scrutiny and managing the monitoring of the impact of contracts
- holding to account should statutory duty be removed

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

168. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th April, 2011 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

169. WORK IN PROGRESS

(a) Councillor License reported that yesterday's meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel had identified the following issues to be included in the forward plan of work:-

- Improvement Notice : balance between quality and quantity of cases dealt with by the common assessment process
- potential sub or city regional review regarding the recruitment and retention of social workers

(b) Councillor Austen thanked the scrutiny advisers and her fellow scrutiny panel members for their help and assistance over the last few years, particularly with regard to the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.

170. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

171. COUNCILLOR JANE AUSTEN

The Chairman reported that this was Councillor Austen's last scrutiny meeting following her decision not to seek re-election to the Council.

Resolved:- That Councillor Austen be thanked for her services to the Council and scrutiny in particular and she be wished all the very best for the future.