

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
28th January, 2011

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

An apology for absence was received from The Mayor (Councillor McNeely).

114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

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

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

116. SCRUTINY REVIEW - FUTURE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chairman indicated that, given the new landscape, like other parts of the Council, it was essential that overview and scrutiny reviewed its arrangements to ensure that the job was done even more efficiently and effectively whilst continuing to provide value for money. It was important to improve the outcomes of the scrutiny process which could mean adopting new ways of working and/or structures.

The review was underway and this session was to focus on what was being done, what needed to be done and what, if anything, could be done differently.

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, contextualised the rationale behind the review and challenges being faced. Reference was made to the support being given to the review from Sheffield University.

Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, elaborated on the questionnaire that had been sent to members and officers and the responses so far.

Caroline then facilitated the discussion and members responded to the following questions:-

- What do the public expect from scrutiny
- What are your views on the following areas that had featured as the most important issues from the questionnaire responses and were they the right areas for scrutiny to focus on:-
 - Holding the Council and other partners to account for their performance (as part of self regulation)
 - Need to provide challenge to budget proposals and expenditure (to ensure transparency and value for money was achieved)
 - Reflecting and articulating the public voice

- Scrutiny should play a far greater role in policy development. Looking less at issues after decisions have been taken and more at big issues and finding the solutions, influencing the way services develop.
Is that the right approach and, if so, what needed to change.
- How effective were the monthly or six weekly panel meetings.
- Did there need to be better engagement of back bench members and, if so, how could that be achieved
- What further support did members need to fulfil the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair and what kind of support did back bench members need
- Should the role of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee change how should the Committee relate to other areas of scrutiny
- Considering the future for scrutiny and the need to do more for less, what three things would you retain and what three things would you change

The Chairman thanked everyone for their participation.

Resolved:- That the comments and views be considered as part of the review process.

117. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January, 2011 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

118. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Austen reported that the latest meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel had been themed on crime and disorder and considered:-

- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill
- Rotherham Victim Support
- National Indicator Set and Fear/Perceptions of Crime : Current Situation
- Partners and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings
- Procurement Strategy : Red Status Actions

A special meeting of the Panel had been arranged for 3rd February, 2011 to consider:

- scrutiny review of the Council's website
- the future of overview and scrutiny

(b) Councillor P. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel had considered:

- adverse weather conditions and the effect on heating in Council properties
- crematorium services (including a visit to the crematorium)

(c) Councillor Whysall reported that the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel was awaiting the report on winter maintenance and that the next meeting was to be held at the Advanced Manufacturing Park.

(d) Councillor Jack reported that the next meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel would focus on health training

(e) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- support for school governors
- education maintenance allowance
- Children and Young People's Services performance indicators : quarter 2
- Children and Young People's Services Notice to Improve : progress and exceptions
- Work programme

119. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.