

Report to Constitution and Members Services Panel

Date of meeting: 14 September 2009

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Review

Officer contact for further information: S Hill Ext 4249

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins Ext 4607



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That members provide feedback to Officers on other authorities Scrutiny functions; and
- (2) That members determine any further steps they wish to take in the review

Report:

1. At the last meeting members considered the review of the OSC function and asked that officers provide a list of authorities which provide either different ways of operating their Scrutiny arrangements or communicating with the public. The list below are suggested authorities that members may wish to review prior to the meeting.
2. It is very apparent that there is no 'model' for scrutiny. Local operation of scrutiny varies to meet local circumstance and issues. There does seem to be a preference for the central 'management' committee with a number of Panels or Task and Finish groups, a model put in place some years ago here. Some authorities appoint 'Commissions' which fulfil the same function.
3. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has recently announced the winners of good scrutiny awards, which was a national competition. Officers have included links to some of the sites on the shortlist where they appear to provide different styles of scrutiny project success.
4. The list also provides links to 'local' authorities and includes different methods of engagement and publicity. Notes have been made against each site.

EFDC Scrutiny Page (as a comparison):

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy/Scrutiny_home.asp

CfPs shortlisted Community Engagement Authorities for 2009-09-03

Bedford Borough Council:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/overview_and_scrutiny.aspx

Notes: Site includes a handbook and the 'Scrutineer' newsletter

Birmingham City Council:

http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/GenerateContent?CONTENT_ITEM_ID=22172&CONTENT_ITEM_TYPE=0&MENU_ID=574

Notes: Press releases, Reports

Maidstone

http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/your_council/overview_scrutiny.aspx

Notes: Public Review Suggestions, Webcasting, Community engagement

Cardiff

http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2872%2C3250%2C4337&parent_directory_id=2865

Notes: No management committee, Unitary Authority

Suffolk County

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/AboutSCC/SpecialistSupportFunctions/ScrutinyAndMonitoring/Services/ScrutinyTeam/>

Notes: Recently commended on review carried out jointly with police authority on prostitution, newsletters

Essex CC

<http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/dis/guc.jsp?channelOid=14572&guideOid=14032&guideContentOid=14580>

Notes: Local County Council

Other 'Local' Authorities

Basildon

<http://www.basildon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2092>

Notes: Commission + Committees + task and finish panels, public request for scrutiny

Braintree

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/Braintree/councildemocracy/Scrutiny.htm>

Notes: Local District, witness feedback and guidelines

Redbridge LB

http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/cms/council_democracy/scrutiny_home_page.aspx

Notes: Public requests, Q & A

Thurrock

<http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/democracy/scrutiny/>

Notes: Good website guidance, public call-in

5. Members are asked to consider these sites and discuss whether they wish officers to bring forward any further reports for consideration.