

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 16 February 2010

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – February 2010

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from December 2009 to the present be noted.

Report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 17 December 2009.

1. At the December meeting, the Committee considered the call-in of the Cabinet report on arrangements regarding scanned planning files. On consideration of the arguments the Committee decided to confirm the decision, which has now been implemented.
2. The Committee then considered the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel report on their review of Overview and Scrutiny. They had considered various aspects of scrutiny and being wide ranging had brought forward a number of smaller refinements to the operation of scrutiny at the Council together with a number of proposals for further reports in the next year. On consideration the committee agreed all 21 recommendations put forward.
3. They then considered the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel report on financial regulations, updating details on contract standing orders and officer delegation, ensuring they were up to date and reflected current statutory requirements. The Committee agreed this report and it went to the December Council meeting where it was agreed.
4. The Committee then endorsed the terms of reference for the Sustainable Communities Task and Finish Panel and went on to consider their work programme, where they noted that the District Valuation Officer would be coming to their January meeting and the local West Essex PCT would be coming to the March meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 28 January 2010.

5. At their January meeting, the Committee received the District Valuation Officer for East Anglia, who spoke to the Committee on local business rateable values. He was robustly questioned by the members of the committee, other members present and also by leave of the chairman, members of the public. He was left with a very firm impression of the council's opinion on the recent NDR increases in the area and the effect it was having on local businesses.
6. They then considered their approach to the North East London Health Services consultation document. They would be considering this at their next meeting in March and would be receiving a presentation on this from the West Essex PCT. They discussed the line of questioning that the Committee should take and considered that apart from the

representative from West Essex PCT they should also invite County Councillor Chris Pond, officers from Essex Link, a representative from North East London PCT and Councillor Brian Sandler.

7. They also considered the Budget report. This had been through the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. The Chairmen of each of these panels were there to report on their deliberations. The Committee noted and welcomed the reduction of the Council Tax to 1.5% and agreed the recommendations as amended.

8. The Committee then went on to consider the report of the Pitt Review Task and Finish Panel and agreed to close the Panel down and to reinstate it once the Government and Essex County Council has issued clearer guidance. They also noted the report on the outcome of the recent survey on district transport in rural areas.

9. Finally they considered the report from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel on the annual review of Contract Standing Orders. They agreed the recommendations and this should now be at this Council meeting for consideration and agreement.