

## ***Report to Council***

***Date of meeting: 14 December 2010***

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council –  
December 2010**

**Chairman: Councillor Richard Morgan**



### **Recommendation:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from October 2010 to the present be noted**

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### **Report.**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 18 October 2010.**

1. At the October meeting the Committee was due to receive a presentation from Jeannie Wright, the Principal of Epping Forest College. However, due to an IT failure she could not attend our meeting and this will be rearranged for another date.
2. The Committee then considered three reports from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel.
3. The first report was on a proposal made by Councillor Whitbread on the possibility of establishing deputies for Portfolio Holders. The Panel had considered the proposal and concluded that the position of Deputy Portfolio Holders be introduced and appropriate provision be made in the Council's Constitution. The consideration of any special responsibility allowances to the deputy cabinet members is to be deferred until 2011/12.
4. The second report looked at arrangements for the public to address the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The highlights of the proposal were that:
  - Members of the public should be allowed to address these meetings in line with the Planning Sub-Committee;
  - Persons could only address the meeting on items that were on the agenda;
  - A maximum of two persons being able to address the meeting on any one item;
  - Only three items on any agenda to have speakers;
  - Three minutes to be allocated to any one speaker; and
  - These arrangements to be reviewed in 12 months time.
5. Our Committee added that if a speaker wanted to circulate papers or photos they should only be able to do so before the meeting and endorsed the report.
6. Lastly, our Committee considered a short report on the cancellation of meetings in extreme weather conditions. This report made recommendations to amend the constitution and provided procedures for the cancellation of meetings. We agreed the report and it went to the November Council meeting along with the other two reports.

## Overview and Scrutiny Meeting - 29 November 2010

7. At the November meeting, the Committee received an interesting presentation from four members of the Youth Council, giving an update on their developing Youth Council programme. As well as giving a comprehensive breakdown of their work programme and achievements over the last year they were asking for revenue funding of £12,000 to enable them to continue to fund their day-to-day running costs of transportation, training and events. It would not fund their project work as this money would come from outside grants. The Youth Council had been in receipt of an annual Council grant of £12,000 for some years now and as the number of Youth Councillors had increased over time, this in effect, amounted to a cut in their budget.

8. The Committee were very impressed with their presentation and were supportive of their request for the funding.

9. We next reviewed the past six months of the Overview and Scrutiny's work. We went through the work programme of the Committee and all the Standing and Task and Finish Panels. We noted that there was still room for work to be added into the work programme and members were asked if they wished the committee to review any topics then they should let Democratic Services know.

10. Councillor Mrs Wagland then took the Committee through her Children Services Task and Finish Panel interim report which voiced the Panel's concerns on Essex County Council's recent amendments to the county structure for Children's Services.

11. She asked the Committee to consider if they wished to respond formally to Essex County Council on their preferred partner approach to commissioning children's services and this was agreed by the Committee.

12. It was also suggested that a responsible officer from County be asked to come along to either, the Task and Finish Panel, the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee or even to Cabinet or Council to be quizzed by members and have our views on their new Children Services Structure made known to them.

13. The Committee then considered and noted the performance for the first six months of the Council's Key Objectives (2010/11) and went on to review the Cabinet's Forward Plan for the remainder of the year.

14. We then considered the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel's report on the duty to respond to petitions, which we approved and this is now on this agenda for Council's consideration and approval.

15. Finally, we agreed that the Planning Services Standing Panel could take the government's consultation paper on 'New Homes Bonus' paper directly to this Council's meeting.