

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 28 June 2011

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – June 2011

Chairman: Councillor Richard Bassett



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from April 2011 to the present be noted.

Report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 11 April 2011.

1. The Committee at their meeting on Monday, 11 April 2011 received two presentations. The first was from Jeannie Wright, the Principal of Epping Forest College. She gave an interesting talk on the current situation of the College and where she wanted to take it in the future. Her aim was to develop a 'student centred college' while maintaining a strong financial position and staying community centred. The Committee noted that they had made excellent progress over recent years after their recent troubles.

2. The other presentation was from Dawn Roche and Richard Morgan in their capacity as Magistrates. They spoke of the work they did as Magistrates and the way they interacted with the local community. They also updated the Committee on the new circumstances magistrates will find ourselves in when the budget cuts hit and the number of benches are reduced from 6 to 2 and the closure of the Magistrate Court in Epping at the end of the year.

3. The Committee next considered a report from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel on member training for 2011/12. They had examined the training available for members from a number of different sources and recommended the use of e-learning, joint courses with officers, the publication of training records on the website, a clear schedule of mandatory courses and a tour of the district for new members. They also asked for a Saturday training session to be held again this year. The Committee supported their findings.

4. The Committee next considered the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel report on the Officer Delegation Review. This report updated the delegation schedule and listed any proposed changes both for Council functions, Executive functions and planning delegation. However, there was some uncertainty over the wording in Appendix 3, on household applications. The Committee decided to agree the report, on the understanding that the wording would be looked at and amended if necessary by the Assistant to the Chief Executive, before it went to the Council meeting for consideration.

5. The last report from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel was a Review of Contract Standing Orders. This annual review updated contract standing orders and recommended that the review of Financial Regulations and the review of Contract Standing Orders be carried out on alternative years in the future. This was agreed along with

their other recommendations and the report will be going to full Council for their approval.

6. The next report came from the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel and updated the Committee on the arrangements for the new Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), due to be established next year after elections. The report gave the background, objectives and powers that a PCC would have and set out the possible scrutiny that would need to be carried out once the PCC was in place. The Committee noted the report and agreed that the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel should be kept updated on the progress on the work for the new Police and Crime Commissioner; and that they be tasked with monitoring the use of police resources during the Olympic period.

7. The other report of the Safer Cleaner Greener Panel was on a Home Office Consultation Paper on "More effective responses to Anti-social Behaviour". This consultation reviewed how anti-social behaviour was dealt with by the police and professionals. On consideration, our Committee agreed the suggested replies to the consultation.

8. They then reviewed their draft annual report and work programme. They noted that they had not received any items for their reserve work programme for the next year except for a request to review the rules on the notification of substitutes at meetings. The Committee agreed that this item would sit well in the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel.

9. I would like to remind members that if they have any topics they would wish Scrutiny to look at in the new year, they should complete a form and return it to Democratic Services as soon as possible.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 31 May 2011

10. At their first meeting of the year with a new Chairman, the Committee received the Key Objectives Outturn report for 2010/11. The key objectives are adopted annually by the Cabinet and reviewed on a six monthly basis both by Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet. We reviewed the key objectives and commented on each one in turn.

11. They next considered the final report of the Children Services Task and Finish Panel. This will be going to the July meeting of the Cabinet. The Committee thoroughly endorsed this report, agreeing with their recommendations, and which they commend to the Cabinet. They also wished to congratulate the Members and Officers concerned on an excellent piece of scrutiny work, which the Committee would like publicised on our website and would encourage every member to read. They agreed that should the recommendations be endorsed by Cabinet then O&S would be a suitable place to take the recommendations further and to work on detailed resource and costing implications.

12. We went on to endorse the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for submission to the June Council meeting. We also agreed the membership of the Standing Panels, agreed our upcoming work programme and discussed what we wanted to ask the representative from London Underground at our next meeting.