

## **Report to Council**

**Date of meeting: 14 February 2012**

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny**

**Chairman: Councillor Richard Bassett**



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### **Recommendation:**

**That the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman be noted.**

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### **LSP Presentation**

1. At the meeting held on Tuesday, 24 January, we received a presentation from the LSP Manager, John Houston. He took us through their work over the past year and touched on the issues around the upcoming locality boards. We noted that they had four theme groups on the go at present, looking at Healthier Communities, Sustainable Communities, Safer Communities and Children and Young People. Their current big project is the 'One Shop Local' website where local businesses can advertise their services. Currently, after only five or six weeks of operation, they have about 120 businesses signed up and this number is growing weekly. Despite some negative comments by some of the press the speed the system had been brought to the public and the numbers of businesses who have signed up and are offering vouchers to residents to shop local was impressive.
2. We discussed Locality Boards and were informed that detail on how this would work was still in need of government guidance. No firm plans had been drawn up to how they would operate as yet, as without guidance it would be counter productive. We noted that Epping Forest already had very good partnership working in place and we did not need to add any layers of unwanted bureaucracy.
3. The meeting was then opened out to a question and answer session from the committee and other members present.

### **Budget Report 2012/13**

4. We then considered the Budget report for 2012/13 that had already gone to the joint Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and Scrutiny Panel the week before. We also received a short report from the Chairman of the Finance Standing Panel on their thoughts on the budget. After discussions and clarification on various items we noted the report and agreed the recommendations to the Cabinet meeting on 30 January 2012.

### **Other items Covered**

5. We noted and agreed the draft Key Objectives for 2012/13 and considered and agreed the final report from the Task and Finish Panel looking at senior recruitment in the council. This was referred to this Council meeting for your consideration along with recommendations from the Chief Executive Recruitment Panel.
6. We then reviewed and agreed the new draft terms of reference and work programme

for the Planning Services Standing Panel. We also looked at the work programmes of the various O&S Standing Panels and we would ask if members have suggestions for any of the committees to scrutinise then please contact Democratic Services.

7. The Chairman reported that he attended a meeting of the Essex chairs of O&S on the 13<sup>th</sup> January. The meeting was well attended and many items were discussed on how we can work better together. One of the main suggestions would be to publish an Essexwide work plan on what topics councils were looking at and from that we would exchange information and findings. They also looked at how more joint training could be done. An area of concern to most was that of how Localism would be implemented and also how to scrutinise the Parking partnership.

8. Finally we confirmed the arrangements for joint Overview and Scrutiny training with Harlow DC. This would take place on 15 and 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and all members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Standing Panels and Task and Finish Panels should look to attend, as should any councillor who had an interest in scrutiny.