

Summary of Previous Reviews of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Council decisions on 16th February, 2005;

- (1) That the existing structure of three Committees should be discontinued and be replaced with one new style Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to run the Overview and Scrutiny function of the authority;
- (2) That 'Task and Finish' panels be used for ad hoc projects agreed in the annual work programme particularly in relation to in-depth reviews of services/policies and policy development; (Examples might be this year: RPG 14)
- (3) That 'Standing Panels' be used for cyclical topics (Examples might be: Finance, Performance Review/BVPP, Housing, Constitutional issues);
- (4) That pro rata shall apply to the Co-ordinating Committee and 'Standing' Panels but not to 'Task and Finish' Panels;
- (5) That pro rata of the 'Standing' Panels be used to determine the lowest number of members to achieve cross party representation together with flexibility to allow the inclusion of members who are not members of a political group or on the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;
- (6) That there be flexibility in membership of 'Standing' and 'Task and Finish' Panels by not restricting the membership of Panels to those on the parent committee to allow Councillors with the most appropriate skills to be members of the panel, co-option also to be considered as appropriate and flexibility to allow the inclusion of non-affiliated members;
- (7) That panel memberships be kept to a minimum but with the principle that each political group should be entitled to representation;
- (8) That there be no single party panels;
- (9) That the appointment of Chairmen be determined by Co-ordinating Committee;
- (10) That the Cabinet be advised that the Panels view is that Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups should be discontinued in favour of Task and Finish Panels so that policy development work can be concentrated with Overview and Scrutiny;
- (11) That political groups should be allowed to nominate up to the date of the first meeting of each Panel to avoid the delay in considering issues pending nominations from political groups;
- (12) That the Co-ordinating Committee determine the size of membership of each Panel; terms of reference and timescale and route for reporting;
- (13) That substitute arrangements apply to the Co-ordinating Committee and Standing Panels;
- (14) That the Chairman of the Task and Finish Panel be given discretion to accept alternate members;

(15) That, in order to aid development of cross party working, party whips not apply to Overview and Scrutiny;

Accountability and functions:

(16) That the following issues remain the specific responsibility of Overview and Scrutiny:

- (a) Call-ins;
- (b) Budget Consultation;
- (c) Major Government Consultation Documents of relevance to the District Council;
- (d) Council focused Investigations;
- (e) Investigation/discussions with other public bodies;
- (f) Policy Development;
- (g) Service Improvement Plans.

Accessibility:

(17) That public involvement in meetings be encouraged by use of additional publicity;

(18) That meetings be held in the most appropriate internal/external venues including the use of the Committee Rooms (subject to budgetary considerations);

(19) That there be maximum member participation including evidence gathering through Panels rather than traditional committees;

(20) That Panels, as good practice, should hold a scoping pre-evidence gathering meeting to agree their approach before inviting witnesses;

(21) That all members continue to have the right to attend Panel/Committee meetings;

(22) That every encouragement be given to staff involved in service delivery in providing evidence as part of scrutiny investigations;

(23) That, in order to facilitate the use of the Committee Rooms at the Civic Offices for public meetings, a DDF bid of £8,000 be approved for improved card access arrangements and improved signage;

Work Programming:

(24) That overall responsibility for the Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny rest with the Co-ordinating Committee;

(25) That item requests should be considered via the Co-ordinating Committee if appropriate notice is given by members;

(26) That those bringing forward items must complete a information pro forma and attend to present their case at Committee/Panel;

(27) That the Council use the PICK system for priority setting;

Public Interest: the concerns of local people should influence the issues Chosen

Impact: priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area

Council Performance: priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well.

Keep in Context: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort;

(28) That there should be a mechanism for requests from members/public to be considered for inclusion within the Forward Work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;

(29) That the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be responsible for agenda management to avoid unnecessary delays and deferrals;

(30) That the Council develop guidelines for project management by 'Task and Finish' Panels;

(31) That the Leader attend the first meeting of the year to outline Cabinet plans;

(32) That Portfolio Holders make presentations to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on aspirations early in each Council year;

(33) That the Cabinet be requested to review the Council's key decision policy (is the threshold of £500,000 to trigger a key decision relevant and appropriate?);

(34) That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be considered at every meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;

(35) That Council's Forward Plan (Key decisions list) should be monitored on a regular basis by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;

Cabinet Reporting:

(36) That common report formats be employed for Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and Cabinet – reports to clearly articulate Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee recommendations and views;

(37) That only reports requiring Executive decisions be referred to the Cabinet and that minutes no longer be submitted as matter of course in favour of the common report format;

(38) That there be a dedicated slot on each Cabinet agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Chairman;

Presentation of Overview and Scrutiny Reports

(39) That reports from Standing and Task and Finish Panels be presented by the Chairman of the relevant Panel when submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;

(40) That where reports of Standing and Task and Finish Panels are presented at meetings of the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee, the Council or any other Committee of the Council these should normally be presented by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-

ordinating Committee unless it is agreed that the Chairman of the Panel concerned presents the report;

Support:

(41) That there continue to be a dedicated budget for Overview and scrutiny and that a review of its adequacy be undertaken in the first year of operation of the new Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee arrangements;

(42) That the need for officer support as a prerequisite for the success of the new Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee model be recognised and that subject to budgetary considerations a CSB growth bid be made for such officer support in the sum of £25,000;

Training and development

(43) That there should be an annual planned programme of training including 'mandatory' induction training for new members, skills and techniques training and follow up refresher /review sessions to allow members to assess progress with the new arrangements;

(44) That officers bring forward proposals for pre implementation skills training sessions for members early in 2005/06;

(45) That an in-house guide to scrutiny be developed tailored to the chosen system;

Call – in:

(46) That the Call – in protocol be amended to remove the first stage of the process to allow a full hearing of the substance of the call-in in one stage;

(47) That consideration of Call-ins be the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee which will decide whether to consider the issue itself or direct a Panel to undertake it and report back to the decision maker;

Government Consultation:

(48) That a new procedure for dealing with Government Consultation Documents be agreed whereby members will be advised of new consultation documents via the Members' Bulletin with the right to request consideration by the Co-ordination Committee;

Performance Management:

(49) That Service Business Plans no longer automatically be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee but be placed in the Members' Room with the right for individual members to request their formal consideration;

(50) That selected performance information continue to be formally reported to members through the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, on a quarterly basis;

(51) That the Council use a "traffic light system" for performance indicators as a trigger for inclusion of items in the work programme reviewed periodically – Indicators to be split into (i) Green – on target, (ii) Amber – uncertainty of achieving target; and (iii) Red - clearly below target based upon previous year's performance;

(52) That there be an annual selection of monitored Performance Management Information (priority to be 'red light') using a periodically reviewed 'basket' of indicators;

(53) That detail be provided within performance reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to indicate whether performance on individual indicators is in the upper quartile or whether performance has improved or worsened from the previous two years;

(54) That a graphical format be introduced for the reporting of performance information to Overview and Scrutiny;

(55) That comparative data be included in performance reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee wherever possible, to enable meaningful consideration of performance data;

(56) That performance against those performance indicators not subject to quarterly report to Overview and Scrutiny, be published in the Members' Bulletin in the form of statistical data only;

Implementation and Review:

(57) That the new arrangements be introduced from the new municipal year in May 2005 and are monitored on an ongoing basis;

(58) That a review of the revised arrangements is undertaken towards the end of the 2005/06 Council year;

(59) That the Review Panel be requested to consider proposed consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution required to implement the new system by May 2005 and be authorised to report directly to Council following consultation on such amendments.