

## ***Report to Council***

***Date of meeting: 19 February 2013***

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council –  
January 2013**

**Contact for further information: Councillor R Morgan**



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### **Recommendation:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from December 2012 to the present be noted.**

### **Report.**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 29 January 2013**

1. At our meeting on Tuesday, 29 January 2013, we received a presentation from two representatives from British Telecom; Annett Thorpe, the Regional Partnership Director - East of England and David Leigh, the BT Accounts Manager for EFDC. We noted that BT had a £2.5 billion investment programme for the UK that would finish in 2014 by which time they had hoped to upgrade just about two thirds of the UK. We noted that it was a massive Civil Engineering task that they faced.

2. The Committee proceeded to question the representatives on the speed of broadband in our area and the continual need for the public to be educated in the IT jargon used by the various broadband providers. Reaching all the rural areas in our District would be a challenge but work had been completed to make superfast broadband available in the district's major towns. One Member claimed that there were very low speeds in Langston Road, which, of course, would be a particular concern of this Council and they agreed to look into it.

3. We also received four reports from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel. One was on the Audit and Governance Committee report on Portfolio Holder Assistants. As there had been no Portfolio Holder Assistants appointed this year they recommended, and we agreed, that the issue be reviewed again when Portfolio Holder Assistants were appointed once more.

4. The second report was on the revision to the access to information rules. We also agreed to this and this would be going to Council for your agreement.

5. The third report was on the period of notice for questions to Cabinet, Council and other related meetings. We amended the recommendations slightly so that all periods for submission of questions should read "at least four working days before the meeting". We agreed the recommendations with this amendment and this would also be coming to Council for final approval.

6. The last report we received from the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel was a review of the Appointments Panel, which was deemed to be successful and agreed its continuance be formalised in the constitution. We agreed with this and this report would also be coming to Council for approval.

7. Next we agreed the Terms of Reference for the newly established Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel and then went through our Work Programme, adding two new presentations, one on Corporate Parenting and one from the Probation Service; however we face a log jam of reviews and it is likely some may be held over until the next Council year.

8. We then considered the request from Councillor Stallan to establish a Task and Finish Panel to review the protocol for (planning) site visits. After a lively debate it was agreed that this should initially go to a special meeting of the District Development Control Committee planning Chairmen and Vice-chairmen to consider this request and make a recommendation.

9. We then considered a planning report on expanding the current pre-application charging to include advice on minor type applications. We agreed with the additional charges and also added a proposal for an additional charge on retrospective applications. An amended report with this addition will be going to a future Cabinet meeting for their consideration.

10. Lastly we received a report detailing how the PCC elections held in November 2012 were run and any associated problems that were incurred at the time.