

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 30 October 2007

Subject: OS report to Council – October 2007

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from July 2007 to the present be noted.

Report.

The main Overview and scrutiny Committee

1. At a special meeting, held on 2 August 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report evaluating the future of webcasting at this council. The Senior Democratic Services Officer gave a presentation on the webcasting pilot review. The meeting noted that over 50 webcasts had been undertaken over the last year including non-meeting events. EFDC is now the most watched local government webcaster in England and had fourteen and a half thousand viewers over the 12 month period. The Committee concluded that the continuation of webcasting of Council meetings and events be endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet.

2. The meeting scheduled for 30 August 2007 was cancelled. The meeting held on 4 October went ahead as planned. At this meeting the Committee:

- authorised the Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel to report directly to Council on constitution changes to Planning Applications submitted by Councillors and on revised the Cabinet Committee Membership rules;
- reviewed the membership of the Environment and Planning Services Standing Panel, in the light of the resignation of Councillor Mrs Cooper from the Conservative Group, Councillor Pritchard was added to the Panel and Mrs Cooper retained her seat on the Panel;
- received an update of the Council's Free Saturday Car Parking Scheme and have agreed (with the Portfolio Holder) that no changes to the Scheme should be made at present and that another progress report should be made in April 2008;
- reviewed the work of the Standing and Task and Finish Panels at this half-way stage of the municipal year;
- disbanded the Town Centre and Car Park Task and Finish Panel, with the rump of their remaining work on Anti-social behaviour in car parks transferring to the Environment and Planning Standing Panel;
- agreed to receive a presentation by the Head of County Youth Services on the proposed re-organisation of youth services in our area.

Standing Panels

3. The 4 Standing Panels each have a rolling programme that consider ongoing cyclical issues and are comprised of the Housing Standing Panel under the Chairmanship of Councillor S Murray; the Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel chaired by Councillor R Church; the Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Jon Whitehouse; and the Environment and Planning Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Mrs Smith.

4. The Housing Standing Panel did not meet on 5th July 2007 as they had completed their scheduled workload at their last meeting in April 2007. They are due to meet again on 25 October 2007, to consider the Housing Strategy on rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and energy efficiency. They will also review the allocation scheme.

5. The Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel met on 30 July and 11 October 2007. At their July meeting they considered arrangements for emergency situations, the protocol on Partnerships and other external organisations and an update of the Local Government Bill. At its October meeting they considered the review of polling stations, the operation of Cabinet in emergency situations, the determination of members Planning Application, a review of Cabinet Committee membership, and a review of the O&S review seminar held on 18 September.

6. The Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel met on 14th August 2007 when they considered Key Performance Indicators (quarter 1), the Local Area Agreement and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Plan and quarterly Financial Monitoring. The Panel will meet again on 13 November.

7. The Environment and Planning Standing Panel met on 5 September 2007, when they concluded their work on Travellers and Paynes Lane but agreed that the Panel should keep a watch in brief on general Travellers issues. They agreed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, and endorsed it to Cabinet for their approval, and agreed the final report and action plan that came from the Nazeing Focus Day. They also received a report on Parking in Residential Areas and a review of the Local Area Agreement. They agreed to invite the new area Highways Manager to attend their next meeting, and set up a sub group to consider the Clean neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, consisting of Councillors Angold-Stephens, Mrs Sartin and Mrs Whitehouse.

Task and Finish Panels

8. Of the four Task and Finish Panels only the Leisure Task and Finish Panel had met since July (twice). The Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel is still awaiting on the Government to finalise their Crime and Disorder Act. The provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Panel will meet at the end of October and the Town Centre and Car Parks Panel has been disbanded with the residue of their work going to the Environment and Planning Standing Panel.