

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING GROUP HELD ON 8th April 2009

Present:

Members of the Group:

Councillors: David Booth,
Ken Browne
Alan Cockburn
Richard Grant (Chair)
Mick Jones
Jerry Roodhouse
Bob Stevens

Officers: David Carter, Strategic Director Customers, Workforce and Governance
Monica Fogarty, Assistant Chief Executive
Michelle McHugh, Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager
John Wright, Committee Manager

1. General

(1) Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2009

The minutes of the 28th January 2009 meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Matters arising

There were no matters arising

2. Full Year Performance Report

The Group considered a report on the performance of the Overview and Scrutiny function during 2008/09. During 2008/09 95.8% of scrutiny recommendations had been accepted by the Cabinet which was an increase of 22.3% on the previous year. The percentage of recommendations which were implemented had also continued to increase.

The Group was informed that the review of flooding in Nuneaton had been nominated for the Centre for Public Scrutiny "Good Scrutiny Awards" and the shortlist would be announced in June.

Members expressed concern that the numbers of recommendations relating to external organisations, especially health, were not included in the performance figures. Most of those recommendations had been adopted by the relevant organisations and this was good news for the council as it reflected the positive nature of partnership working.

Members requested that a breakdown, by overview and scrutiny committee, of the numbers of recommendations that had been accepted by the Cabinet be provided to all Cabinet member and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs

Resolved that the report be noted

3. Overview and Scrutiny Strategy Action Plan - 12 month update

The Group considered a report on an update on the progress made against the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy Action Plan. The Group noted that the majority of the actions contained in the action plan had been achieved.

It was noted that guidance on scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships was expected to be received from the Home Office in the next few weeks. There would need to develop a county wide agreement on how this would be approached and implemented and therefore this matter would be raised at a future meeting of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Chief Executives.

Members expressed concern at the current method of reporting performance information to overview and scrutiny committees. The quarterly performance reports were felt to be an old fashioned means of bringing the information to members attention as, the information was often out of date and frequently combined with information that was outside the purview of the committee. It was often not clear how and why individual targets had been set and by whom. The Group was informed that the performance reports were being reviewed and in future would be more purposeful, focusing on performance improvement. It was also felt that there needed to be greater clarity of the roles of Portfolio Holders, Scrutiny Chairs and Strategic Directors in signing off performance monitoring reports and it was suggested that greater ownership of performance and resultant improvement plans could be achieved by both Portfolio Holders and Strategic Directors signing off performance and improvement plans.

The Group was informed that options for changing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 23rd June 2009.

The Group requested that the report be re-submitted to OSCG after the June elections to allow the "new" OSCG to give direction as to what should be included in the 2009/10 action plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy.

Resolved that

- 1) The report be noted
- 2) The report be re-submitted to OSCG after the June elections to allow the "new" OSCG to give direction as to what should be included in the 2009/10 action plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy.

4. Warwickshire County Council Integrated Improvement Plan

The Group considered a report on the CPA Corporate Assessment, Joint Area Review and Joint Inspection of Warwickshire Youth Offending Service Integrated Improvement Plan and the findings contained in the plan which could have implications for the development of overview and scrutiny committee work plans. Members felt that because of the changes in memberships of the committees which were likely following the elections, consideration of this report should be deferred until the first meeting of the group following the election.

Resolved that

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) Consideration of the details of the report be deferred until the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Group following the election.

5. Overview and Scrutiny Core Work Programme

The Group considered a report on the progress made against the 2008/09 Overview and Scrutiny Core Work Programme and asked the Group for its views on the issues that should be included in a three year Overview and Scrutiny Core Work Programme for 2009/12. Members were informed that all the majority the current years work programme had been completed. There were two outstanding items relating to Adult and Community Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one which would be picked up the Committee in September 2009 and the other had already been addressed by Cabinet and therefore it was agreed this issue was no longer a priority for the Committee.

Members felt that because of the changes in memberships of the committees which were likely following the elections, consideration of the aspects of the report which related to the future work programme should be deferred until the first meeting of the group following the election.

Members suggested that the following matters could be included in the core work programme

- A joint review, including all public services in Warwickshire, of back office support and the possibilities of sharing services to reduce costs
- A review of the role and effectiveness of the new post of Assistant Chief Executive and the work of the Performance and Partnership Unit to establish whether objectives had been achieved
- A review of grants allocated to Community and Voluntary Sector and outcomes achieved.

Resolved that consideration of the aspects of the report which related to the future work programme, together with the addition of the items listed above, be deferred until the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group following the election and the three .

6. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and the role of Overview and Scrutiny

The Group considered a report on an outline of potential roles for Overview and Scrutiny in the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime. Three roles had been identified

- Overview and scrutiny reviews as a source of evidence in the CAA process
- The CAA assessment informing overview and scrutiny work programmes
- Scrutiny of Warwickshire's self evaluation

Members were reminded that the self evaluation was due to be submitted by the end of June. This would raise difficulty in having the evaluation considered by scrutiny due to the elections being held in early June. The Group felt that the self evaluation should be considered by the Leaders Liaison Group and Cabinet.

Resolved that

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) The report be re-submitted to OSCG after the June elections to allow the "new" OSCG to give direction on the potential roles for Overview and Scrutiny in the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime

7. Reducing Overview and Scrutiny Printing Costs

The Group considered a report on proposed changes to producing Overview and Scrutiny Review Reports and OSC's Annual Reports.

Members were informed of the need to reduce the cost of producing overview and scrutiny reports whilst still providing a professional looking documents. Members were shown examples of standard report wallets which could be used with individual reports inserted in to them.

The Group also considered the potential benefits of producing a single annual overview and scrutiny report rather than reports from individual committees. Members felt this would be appropriate.

Resolved that.

- 1) The use of generic scrutiny wallets for scrutiny review reports be approved; and
- 2) A single Overview and Scrutiny Annual report to be produced at the end of each municipal year

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Group noted that their next meeting would be held on 1st July 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

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Chair

The Group rose at 3.15p.m.