

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING GROUP HELD ON 25 APRIL 2007

Present:

Members of the Group:

Councillors: David Booth
Ken Browne (Chair)
Richard Chattaway
Jerry Roodhouse
Richard Grant

Officers: David Carter, Strategic Director Performance and Development
Jim Graham, Chief Executive
Mandeep Kalsi, Performance Support Officer
Sue Littlewood, Corporate Planning Manager
Ann Mawdsley, Senior Committee Administrator
Jane Pollard, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

1. General

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Core Work Programme 2007/08 report, tabled at the meeting, to be considered at County Council on 15 May 2007.

Cllr Roodhouse noted that the Health O&S Committee had completed two phases on mental health and it was agreed that in order for there to be no duplication with the Adult and Community Services O&S (A&CS O&S) review of Mental Health/Dementia, that the reports to the A&CS O&S be copied to a member of the Health O&S, or a member of the Health O&S be invited to attend the A&CS O&S meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Core Work Programme 2007/08 was agreed.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mick Jones, Frank McCarney and Bob Stevens

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse declared a personal interest as a member of the Rugby Borough Council.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2007.

The minutes of the 20 March 2007 meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

David Carter reported that a request had been received to incorporate Park and Ride with Stratford District Council and the Strategic Directors would consider a report on this on 16 May.

2. The White Paper and Scrutiny

The Group was advised of the need to consider the best way forward for Overview and Scrutiny Committees in light of the White Paper and the encouragement it gives to citizens to take a greater view of public services and to become more involved. David Carter added that there would be a seminar following the AGM on 15 May to look at these issues.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted

1. There was some concern regarding the effectiveness of the new roles without statutory powers and it was agreed that the challenge would be to develop relationships with other bodies and demonstrating the value of participation to all.
2. Community Protection would be considering their new powers in terms of their work programme but were aware of the sensitivity required when scrutinising groups like the CDRPs where the lines of responsibility were not clear.
3. The financial consequences of the enhanced two-tier working and potential savings should be transparent to the public.
4. Members welcomed the opportunities for local scrutiny and the need for Members to realise that scrutiny was the way forward for their involvement in the areas they served, particularly in terms of the Local Area Agreements.
5. There was a need to be clear what was proposed by the legislation.
6. Members noted the need for the tools to carry out their new roles and acknowledged the pressure Scrutiny Officers would be under.
7. Chairs had the discretion to agree to consider any item on the agenda and most Members operated through their Groups.

Resolved:

That the Group welcomed the opportunities for overview and scrutiny in Warwickshire and requested the Chief Executive to revert with:

- options taking into account the community involvement and public questioning
- resource implications and how these would be addressed.

3. Reporting Performance to Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development taking forward action identified in the Scrutiny Review Action Plan in relation to Performance reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, providing context on the revised reporting framework and setting out presentational options for consideration by the Group.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were agreed:

1. The system was currently set up to include corporate and directorate levels of indicators. There was a need to get the indicators right and in future Directorate score cards would be able to drill down to a greater degree and add further indicators where relevant.
2. Information such as Best Value Indicators, Performance Indicators, Local Area Agreement Indicators and benchmarking information that was included in the Briefing Book, could be accessed and agreement would need to be reached on how this was pulled out and presented to give Members the information they wanted.
3. The Scrutiny and Planning and Performance teams would be working with Chairs to identify priorities, which would be tracked at more regular frequency, and in drilling down indicators given higher priority needed to be identified.
4. Where persistent trends were identified, the system would allow the O&S Committees to scrutinise those issues and ask questions of Portfolio Holders and lead officers.
5. Awareness training would be provided for Members before the system was put in place.

Resolved:

That the Group agrees to receive a dummy report at their next meeting showing:

- Exception reporting (good)
- Exception reporting (bad)
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Comparative benchmarking data

4. Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Performance Management Framework

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development introducing the draft Performance Management Framework for the Overview and Scrutiny Function.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were agreed:

1. The Framework would need to be ongoing during the course of the year, with input from both support officers and Members.
2. It was agreed that the words “for the Cabinet” be removed from Appendix A, page 1, bullet point 2.
3. Members agreed that targets would not be beneficial and should not be included.
4. It was agreed, by a vote of three in favour and two against, that indicators 6, 7 and 8 be removed from Appendix B, but where possible be included in the Annual Reports of the Committee.
5. There was a feeling among some Members of O&S that the work put in by the Committees was not evidenced by actions and it was acknowledged that where targets were set on an annual pattern and implementation was often across a two to three year timetable, it was difficult to track.

Resolved:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group approves for adoption the performance management framework with the changes set out above.

5. Implementing the Outcomes of the Scrutiny Review – Update on Action Plan

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development updating Members on progress with the action plan.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Member training had generally gone well and Julia Wright's report was imminent. Following receipt of her report a meeting would be held before a report on the Member Development Strategy was considered at the next Cabinet meeting.
2. It was agreed that officers should be designing charts in black and white to ensure they were clear when printed.

Resolved:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group note the progress which has been made.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The Group noted that their next meeting was scheduled for Monday 25 June 2007 at 2.00 p.m.

Jane Pollard asked Members if they would like to visit Staffordshire for a Partnership Performance Scrutiny meeting on 1 June in the morning. It was agreed that she would e-mail the details to Members.

The Group rose at 3.35 p.m.

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Chair