

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th June 2011

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor Mrs. Patten.

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Bell, Mrs. Mead and Pearson.

APOLOGY

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Mrs. Brown (Conservative Group).

OS/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd March 2011 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

OS/2. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FOCUS SESSION AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report on the annual Focus Session, held earlier in the day and was asked to give consideration to the Committee's work programme for the year ahead.

Members were given a summary of the main areas covered at the Focus Session, comprising an induction presentation, an update on the Localism Bill relating to overview and scrutiny and a paper on work programming, to look at starting the Committee's annual review process earlier.

There had also been a detailed discussion of the review areas undertaken during the previous year, with the Committee considering whether to conclude and report on some reviews, to add new reviews to the work programme and for the scoping of these new review areas. An updated schedule had been circulated at the Committee, summarising the proposals and to seek formal approval of the work programme. This was discussed further and minor amendments were suggested.

It was proposed to include the following areas in the Committee's work programme for 2011/12:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers
- Swadlincote Woodlands Scheme – Future Management Plan
- Bringing Empty Properties Back Into Use

- Housing Benefits – Increasing Costs Falling to SDDC
- Treasury Management Aspects of HRA Self Financing
- Budget Scrutiny
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny
- Annual Report

Additionally, the Committee considered the following review areas, on which more detail is provided below:

New Leisure Contract

With regard to the previous review areas on cultural facilities and services, it was agreed not to undertake further work relating to Rosliston Forestry Centre or Etwall Leisure Centre. However, it was noted that an annual report on the new leisure contract would be submitted to the Housing and Community Services Committee, which Members wished to monitor, as this might identify a potential review area for the future.

Broadband

It was proposed to conclude the current review and to receive a report at the next Meeting. There was the potential for a task group to continue working on this area as further funding sources were available for broadband initiatives, but this would need the approval of a revised scope.

Funded Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded of the task group used previously and it was felt a task group could be reappointed from the new Committee, to continue this review work. It was agreed to receive a further report on this area at the next Meeting.

Treasury Management Aspects of HRA Self Financing

It was noted that the Finance and Management Committee was due to receive a presentation at its October Meeting. Members wished to attend that Committee, prior to commencing the scrutiny review work. A further area raised for consideration under this review related to housing repair elements.

Members' IT

It was noted that the Finance and Management Committee was due to receive a report on ICT at its September meeting. Members wished to monitor this subject, as it might identify a potential review area for the future.

Other Potential Reviews

Two Members proposed new review areas, firstly on mobile telephone coverage in South Derbyshire and also on levels of funding reductions across the County for Surestart projects. Both were asked to submit scoping documents for consideration. Further suggested reviews might come forward from the Environmental and Development Services Committee, as its Chairman proposed to seek that Committee's views on a number of potential areas. Two draft scoping documents had been submitted by a Member prior to the Focus Session. These related to the housing allocations process and the Northgate contract. The respective Heads of Service had responded at the Focus Session and these responses were summarised. It had been offered to provide a briefing note to all Members of the Council on the allocations

process and it was felt that this should be done. On the Northgate contract, it was suggested that the Committee await the first annual report to the Finance and Management Committee, before considering this area further.

Next, the Committee discussed further consultation on the work programme. It was suggested that Members use the forthcoming round of Area Forums to publicise the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Reference was also made to an offer from the Chair of the Swadlincote 50+ Forum, to act as a means of engaging with the public on Scrutiny. Officers were asked to pursue this and report back.

As the Agenda for the next meeting would be lengthy, it was agreed that the Meeting commence at 5.00pm.

It was agreed:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives the report from the annual Focus Session.**
- (2) That the Committee approves its initial 2011/12 Work Programme, as set out above.**
- (3) That the Committee agrees the proposed arrangements for further consultation on the work programme.**

MRS. A. PLENDERLEITH

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 6.55 p.m.