

Council

27 November 2008

Report of Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee

Update on Scrutiny Work since October Council Meeting and Recommendations relating to Review of Scrutiny Structure

Summary

1. This report is submitted by the Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee, in accordance with the constitutional requirements set out in Standing Order 4.3(l) to update Council on scrutiny work during the period of activity since the last Council meeting and to set out any recommendations such as may be made to Council in relation to that work.

Update on Scrutiny Work

Health Scrutiny Committee

2. Health Scrutiny has just completed a full review looking at the experiences of older people with mental health problems (and those of their families/carers) who access general health services for secondary care. The Committee's aim in doing this was to identify any potential improvements to practices. Councillor Fraser, as Chair of the Committee, will be presenting its final report to Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration in December 2008.
3. The Committee has also been doing much work on understanding its relationship with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), which are independent but formally constituted bodies replacing the former Patient and Public Involvement Forums previously attached to NHS Trusts. In future, LINKs will be able to make referrals on matters to Health Scrutiny for investigation and so it is important that Members of the Committee understand the working relationship and share knowledge/experiences. It is considered that LINKs could be an extremely valuable source of gathering customer and patient information in the future.
4. The Committee has continued to show a keen interest in dental provision within the York area and recently had discussions with the Primary Care Trust about the way in which the PCT reported back on developments in dental care to the Committee. A further report will be received at a future meeting of the Committee.
5. The Committee has also just adopted a joint scrutiny protocol with other Yorkshire & Humber Health Scrutiny Committees to provide a framework for

undertaking joint reviews across authorities in relation to regional and specialist health services in accordance with the powers available to all local authorities under the Health & Social Care Act 2001.

Education Scrutiny Committee

6. This Committee has just completed a review of school governors with a view to improving the level of community involvement in governing bodies and developing diversity and skills. The final report was presented to the Executive on 18 November 2008, where the scrutiny recommendations were endorsed and the Executive Member for Children's Services undertook to monitor progress within the Directorate in relation to those recommendations.
7. Currently, the Committee is embarked upon a review relating to a further review of the extended schools agenda aimed at ensuring accessibility and a high quality of provision. Members have just scoped this review, setting out how they intend to carry it out.

Cultural Quarter Ad-hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee

8. The work of this Sub-Committee continues in relation to achieving a long term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum (NRM), York Railway Station and the Minster. So far, the Committee has investigated a range of other cultural quarters and analysed its findings in relation to each. It has visited the cultural quarters in Gateshead and Newcastle. It has held a public information gathering session at the Minster, in York's proposed quarter and responses gleaned from that session will be considered at its next meeting.

Hungate Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee

9. The first meeting of this Sub-Committee took place on 18 November 2008 when it decided how it wanted to scope this review and who it needed to consult and involve in the process. Its purpose is to clarify whether the correct strategy for the accommodation project was set and adhered to and to ensure future similar projects are delivered on time and within budget. Members of the Sub-Committee are keen to gather information quickly for this review and have agreed a further half-day event on 26 November 2008 to gather information initially from appropriate parties.

Planning Enforcement Scrutiny Ad-hoc Sub-Committee

10. This Ad-hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee has scoped this review and is currently in the process of gathering information with regard to finding ways of bringing enforcement cases to an earlier completion through reviewing the Council's approach to planning enforcement and court action.

Update on Work/Recommendations from Scrutiny Management Committee

11. Since the last update to Council, SMC has continued monitoring the implementation of previously agreed scrutiny recommendations and signed off those in relation to past reviews which it feels have been satisfactorily developed or implemented.
12. It has received an update on the work of and progress being made by Health Scrutiny as reported above.
13. Recently, it has also considered introducing a generic protocol for undertaking joint scrutiny reviews with other local authorities, in the light of a topic registered by Councillor D'Agorne relating to food security in response to recession and peak oil. A fellow Councillor at North Yorkshire County Council is also interested in a review of this nature and enquiries are currently being made about the possibility of a joint review. Further information and a feasibility study on this topic will be considered by SMC at its next meeting, together with a slight redraft of the protocol for undertaking this or indeed other joint reviews which may be forthcoming in the future.

Review of Scrutiny Structure

14. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the Committee has considered a report reviewing and presenting alternative options for a scrutiny structure in York. Members will already be aware a series of workshops were held on this in the summer. The full report is attached to this written report at Annex A for Members further information, in the light of the fact that SMC are making a recommendation to Council for consideration on this matter.
15. It is understood that Council Management Team considered this report prior to its submission to SMC and on balance felt that some change to the scrutiny structure in York would be beneficial to bring it more in line with practices in other local authorities and to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny in York, particularly with regard to its contribution to policy development. On balance, therefore, any views expressed by CMT were in endorsement of Option B outlined in the attached report, which sets out a model for introducing multiple standing scrutiny committees and removing existing Executive Member Advisory Panels (EMAPS)
16. Members of Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) had a full debate on the principles behind a structural review and noted the requirement for some change, particularly the need to take account of forthcoming legislative changes relating to a wider involvement of and seeking of information from partners and also to the scrutiny of local area agreement targets.
17. It is fair to say that there were a differing views expressed about each of the options in the paper attached. Narrowly, the Committee expressed a preference for a more traditional approach to undertaking scrutiny and wished to recommend Option B in principle to Council with a view to a Sub-

Committee being set up by Council to consider the structural details and any necessary constitutional changes.

18. As usual the majority of this written report is for Members information in relation to the work of scrutiny. However, as Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee, I will also be moving the following recommendation to Council from the Committee in relation to reviewing the current scrutiny structure, as set out in the Part B minute attached at Annex B to this written report:

“That Option B be adopted and a Committee of Council be formed to consider the detailed implementation of this model and the constitutional changes required.”

Councillor John Galvin
Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee

Annex A – report to SMC on 17 November 2008

Annex B – Part B minute and recommendation to Council.