

Scrutiny Report To Council

June 2011

Report of the Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee

1. This report is submitted by the Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC), 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

Scrutiny Meetings

2. This meeting of Council has been brought forward to the end of June and therefore at the time of putting this report together there have not been any formal business meetings of scrutiny committees since the last meeting of Council in April 2011. However, an ongoing cycle of remit focusing sessions for individual Scrutiny Committees is currently underway. These sessions will help focus all Scrutiny Committees on some key work area priorities for the coming Municipal Year.

Induction

3. The recent District Elections returned 17 new elected Members, the majority of whom as non-Cabinet Members will be involved in scrutiny work in some capacity. As part of the Council's extensive induction programme for those new Members, a workshop was held on 8 June to provide some practical tips, tools and techniques for making a difference in scrutiny. It was an extremely successful session, which also offered the opportunity for new Members to network with other newly elected colleagues from other authorities across the region.

Working Together

4. A focus session for newly appointed Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Members has also taken place to engender a culture within York of scrutiny and the Cabinet working together, with Cabinet utilising scrutiny to help shape future policy direction and future Council practices. This was a positive session facilitated by David McGrath an experienced trainer and former Birmingham City Council elected Member. David also led the induction session above for new Members. Indeed nearly all Cabinet Members were present at the focus session 'Lets Talk Scrutiny' and afterwards signalled their intent and commitment to involve and work with scrutiny in shaping and developing Council practices, policies and key priorities.

The Future

5. As a result of both the Cabinet and Scrutiny Chair Focus Session and of the wider induction event, there was collective agreement that the next step in the

collaborative development of the scrutiny function within City of York Council should be a wider work planning 'conference' involving all Cabinet, Scrutiny and Chief Officers. Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) will lead on this in its primary role in coordinating and managing collective scrutiny business. It is intended to hold this event on Monday 25 July and to again, secure the facilities of David McGrath for the evening.

6. Notwithstanding any future business for scrutiny individual Members or Scrutiny Committees may wish to identify, it is hoped that this SMC event will at least kick start the coming year with some positive scrutiny topics for which there is collective support and a corporate need. We, too, need to be aware of emerging Council priorities given the restraint on resources generally. Going through this process, will secure a collective commitment to scrutiny and the value it adds. As I say, this process will not preclude any future issues being raised in year for scrutiny to address, which will continue to be managed by SMC and the Scrutiny Committees.
7. Democratic Services will be confirming details of the SMC event in due course and I would urge as many Members and Chief Officers to attend as possible. There is a momentum and a commitment to achieving real engagement for effective scrutiny but its success depends upon our collective contributions.

Councillor John Galvin
Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee