

Scrutiny Report to Full Council – 12 April 2007

Scrutiny Management Committee

Since my last report to Full Council on 25 January, the Scrutiny Management Committee has met three times:

- i. On 29 January 2007 SMC considered:
 - a report setting a proposed remit for a new scrutiny topic on Traffic Congestion
 - An interim report from the Highways Maintenance & PFI Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee providing an update on progress made with Part A of the review of Highways Maintenance Procurement

- ii. On 26 February 2007 SMC considered:
 - A report from the Director of City Strategy providing advice on the recommendations made by the Planning & Transport Scrutiny Board now called the Sustainable Development Scrutiny Sub-Committee in connection with their final report on 'Guidance for Sustainable Development'.
 - An update on the implementation of the recommendations made as a result of the scrutiny reviews completed since 2004.

- iii. On 26 March 2007 SMC considered:
 - The final report from the Highways Maintenance Ad-hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee, looking at Part A of the review on procurement arrangements for highways maintenance.
 - A final report from Education Scrutiny Committee, looking at home to school transport services
 - An interim report of the Tang Hall Area Asset Management Plan Sub-Committee, looking at consultation processes and feedback to assist the development of the first Tang Hall Area Asset Management Plan.
 - An update report on progress with developing existing facilities available through the on-line Committee Management System to assist with the tracking of progress with registered scrutiny topics.

Scrutiny Calling-In Function

Since my last report to Full Council on 25 January SMC has not been required to meet in its constitutional calling-in capacity.

Scrutiny Committees

- The Education Scrutiny Committee have completed their review of home-to-school transport contracts, and how pupil safety can be maximised for primary schools. Its recommendations are due to be considered by the Executive on 24 April.

- The Health Scrutiny Committee have been considering the proposed financial recovery plan prepared by the new North Yorkshire and York PCT in order to reduce their expected deficit at the end of the financial year. Members have been concerned about the affects of changes contained in the recovery plan on the citizens of York.
- Close liaison is taking place with York District Hospital to keep members informed about the changes to the capacity of the hospital which are a result of the reduction in the contract with the PCT.
- Members are also being kept updated on the service level agreements with CYC's Adult Social Services and many voluntary sector organisations in York which provide services commissioned by the PCT.
- On 31 January members held a Health forum to which all interested parties were invited in order to discuss their concerns about health services within York. This was well attended and positively received by all participants.
- Members are currently working on their contribution to the Annual Healthcheck which is the self-assessment process which all NHS Trusts must participate in each year. Health OSCs are invited to make a commentary on the core standards which NHS Trusts are assessed against and this is reported verbatim to the Healthcare Commission
- Members are also concerned about dental services in York and are receiving regular reports on the numbers of patients waiting to be allocated to a dentist and also reports about practices running out of units of dental activity before the end of the financial year.
- The waiting list for podiatry services is another area of concern and members are expecting to have an update on this from the PCT at their meeting on 2 April.

Ad-hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committees

There are presently two ad-hoc scrutiny sub-committees set up to scrutinise:

- Use of Council-Owned Land in Tang Hall Area
The final meeting of this Ad-hoc Scrutiny sub-Committee is scheduled for 24 April 2007. SMC will consider its final report at their first meeting in the new municipal year.
- Highways Maintenance Procurement
Work has been completed on part A of the remit for this review and Part B is scheduled to start in the new municipal year. In order to provide continuity in the review, it has been agreed that the same Members will make up this sub-committee, subject to the results of the election.

Since my last report to Council, Scrutiny Services has appointed a permanent replacement for Ruth Sherratt and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Melanie Carr to her role as Scrutiny Officer.

Work continues in Scrutiny to enhance its work programming processes. Members are now able to register scrutiny topics for review on-line via the new Committee Management System and work is ongoing to produce a Scrutiny Forward Plan which will allow Members to receive up-to-date information on forthcoming, on-going and completed scrutiny reviews.

Councillor M Kirk,
Chair, Scrutiny Management Committee.