
MEETING	EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	30 JUNE 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WATT (CHAIR), GUNNELL, HORTON AND MERRETT
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS D'AGORNE, FIRTH, HYMAN AND R WATSON

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, on general issues within the remit of the Committee.

3. NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY IN YORK

Members received a report which highlighted the agreed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny function in York, detailing the terms of reference for the new committees and the resources available to support the function.

The following agreed changes came into effect as of Annual Council in May 2009:

- Remove Executive Member and Advisory Panels
- Replace existing Scrutiny Committees with an increased number of alternative Scrutiny Committees.
- Retain the Scrutiny Management Committee
- The formation of five Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Members commented that the new Scrutiny Committees should aim to examine topics in detail and pull out key issues to look at in depth.

In relation to paragraph 16 bullet point 6 of the Officer's report, Members queried whether a copy of the forward plan should be a key paper for the Committee to be brought to every meeting. Officers advised that the document is lengthy and not suitable to have as a standard item. Members queried whether a summarised version showing which Scrutiny Committee an issue would go to could be produced. Officers agreed to look into this.

Officers pointed out that currently the Forward Plan is showing information for 2 months in advance which would make it difficult for the Committee to identify items for pre-decision scrutiny. Members queried why the Forward Plan was not showing information for 4 months ahead, as is the legal requirement, and asked if this could be a possible Scrutiny Topic to explore how Council departments are using the forward plan.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and further information be received at the next meeting, examining the issues surrounding a potential review of the current effectiveness of the Council's Forward Plan.

REASON: To inform Members of the new arrangements for Scrutiny.

4. 'EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION' - A CORE ELEMENT OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY.

Members considered a report which presented an update report on the Single Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2009/10, in order to inform them of work currently being undertaken throughout the Council in support of the eighth theme of the Corporate Strategy, that of being an Effective Organisation.

Following a review of corporate governance, further areas were identified for possible inclusion in a refreshed version of the SIP. As a result the Corporate Management Team (CMT) received an interim report in April 2009 to inform decisions regarding the 2008/09 SIP workstreams which should continue to the 2009/10 year. Overall nine areas were identified as proposed workstreams.

As there is a SIP behind Effective Organisation, the report had been brought to the Committee to inform Members of the work currently being undertaken. Officers advised that Members may choose to identify a topic for review based on and in support of one of the workstreams.

Members expressed concern at paragraph 11 of the covering report which stated that Audit and Governance Committee had already agreed to look at some of the workstreams. In response to this Officers confirmed they would advise the Committee accordingly in order to prevent duplication.

RESOLVED: That Members:

- (i) note the information contained within the Single Improvement Plan Refresh Report.
- (ii) Will continue to monitor the work being carried out and requested a report be brought to the next meeting.

REASON: To inform Members on the Single Improvement Plan.

5. YEAR-END PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2008/09.

Members received a report which provided details of how the Council had performed in 2008/09, covering the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Officers outlined the report and highlighted the following:

Financial

- A net underspend of £1.478k was projected in 2008/09.
- Due to external pressures City Strategy and Children's Services had overspends.
- A net sum of £1.817k had been received from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for cultural exemption VAT on museums admissions paid between January 1990 to July 2002 and had been added to the general reserve.
- The balance on revenue reserves on 31 March 2009 stood at £8,745k, which looks satisfactory but by 2013 it is anticipated the general fund reserve will be under what is deemed reasonable.

Performance - Corporate Overview

- Not all 200 Indicators have been compared as some are not reportable.
- Pricewaterhouse Cooper Benchmarking Site used to check how well York has done in comparison to other authorities.
- Corporate Health Indicator is something which would fall under the remit of this Committee
- Health and Safety improved for 2008/09, but further improvement is expected.
- Equalities is an area which is not performing well and data is being sought to find out why.

Members considered the report and identified the following areas for further investigation:

- The underlying budget issues in Children's Services and Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS), the underachievement of income for Newgate Market and the issues surrounding graffiti and litter are to be referred to the Scrutiny Management Committee to decide which are the appropriate Scrutiny Committees to look at these issues in more detail.
- Corporate Health – staff sickness rates and corporate health and safety and the lack of corporate data for Equalities and Human Resources – Councillor Gunnell to register a scrutiny topic.
- ITT – Scrutiny Officer, Councillor Gunnell and the Assistant Director of Resources (Transformation and Efficiency) to meet to discuss how best to consider project slippage and underspends within ITT.
- Project management – some key projects appeared not to have been fully delivered after agreed implementation, including the University Pool. Councillor Merrett to register a suitable scrutiny topic. Additionally on key projects, Members then asked Officers to look into a Council Motion regarding provision of a city centre swimming pool, which they recalled having been agreed previously by Council.

- Reserves – Use of reserves report to be brought to the November meeting. Scrutiny Officer to liaise with Kevin Best.
- Members requested a briefing on the More for York Programme.

RESOLVED: That the performance and financial issues identified in the report be noted and the issues identified above for consideration be agreed.¹

REASON: To assist in producing the work plan for the Effective Organisation Overview Scrutiny Committee.

Action Required

1. Investigate the issues identified at the meeting on 30 June, with Officers/Members. MC

6. CORPORATE STRATEGY - RELEVANT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & ACTIONS.

Members received a report that presented the Corporate Strategy key performance indicators and actions relevant to the remit of the Committee.

As part of the restructure of the overview and scrutiny function in York it was agreed that the new standing Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be responsible for:

- Monitoring progress on the council priorities relevant to each committees terms of reference
- Identifying aspects of the Council's operation and delivery services that are perhaps not on target that may be suitable for an efficiency review
- Supporting the achievement of the relevant 'Local Area Agreement' priority targets.

Officers advised Members that the report was brought before them to ensure they have a complete set of information at the outset.

RESOLVED: That Members note the contents of the report.

REASON: To inform the work of this Committee.

7. EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2009-10.

Members considered the work plan for the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2009-10.

Members agreed that the following work areas be added to the work plan:

- Forward Plan – Corporate use of the forward plan throughout the Council – September 2009.

- HR and Equalities – Councillor Gunnell to register a scrutiny topic to focus on the lack of corporate data and on issues related to the corporate health of the organisation.
- Resources Directorate and relevant other directorates – Councillor Merrett to register a scrutiny topic examining the management and delivery of key projects.
- Reserves – Report to be brought to the meeting on 24 November.
- More for York - programme briefing.
- ITT – Officers and Councillor Gunnell to discuss how best to consider issues.

RESOLVED: That the work areas detailed above be added to the work plan of this Committee.

REASON: To assist in the planning of work for this Committee.

Councillor Watt, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.30 pm].