
MEETING	CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE	24 JUNE 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS GALVIN (CHAIR), FRASER, HORTON, JEFFRIES, KING, MCILVEEN, POTTER, RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR) AND STEWARD

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in respect of business on the agenda.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 13 May 2013 be approved, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

4. **THE COUNCIL'S JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE IN EQUALITIES**

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an update on the Council's new governance arrangements for equalities. It also provided details of the Council's ambition and progress towards 'Excellent' under the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

To enable progress to be made governance arrangements for equalities had been refreshed. With the following new board and

group appointed and a new remit for the Equalities Advisory Group (EAG) and refocus of the Staff Equalities Reference Group (SERG):

- Fairness and Equalities Board
- Fairness and Leadership Group (FLAG)

It was confirmed that in order to strengthen scrutiny arrangements reports would be brought to CSMC every six months. With the Committee also being involved in EFLG self assessment. The Committee were asked to consider how scrutiny could help to strengthen the Council's equalities performance through their work and assist in the improvement of Members understanding of equalities issues through appropriate training.

Further details in each of the self assessment categories areas, setting out the areas of concern and any proposed action was set out at paragraphs 17 to 104 of the report.

Officers confirmed that the recent Peer Review had confirmed the need to engage scrutiny more effectively and to hold Cabinet to account, as had the evidence from other peer authorities. Information gathered across the Council had informed this update report and Members were now asked to identify any further briefings required and consider how equalities could be built into scrutiny.

Members went on to raise a number of issues in general and specifically in relation to the Fairness and Equalities Board terms of reference annexed to the report, including the "influencing" role of the Board and its composition.

Additionally Members were particularly concerned about the continuing use of the term "disabled people" despite the agreed advice to adopt consistency in terminology in line with the "social model of disability". Officers agreed to refer this issue to the Officer Leadership Group for attention.

In light of their debate, Members went on to discuss what value scrutiny could add to this ongoing journey and:

RESOLVED: i) That the details of the Council's progress towards 'Excellent' under the Equalities Framework for Local Government be received and noted.

- ii) That, in order to strengthen the Council's performance in equalities and to ensure consideration of equalities is built into both scrutiny and Council activity:
 - a. CSMC to receive a six-monthly progress report against the Equalities Framework.
 - b. All overview and scrutiny committees to address equalities implications in future scrutiny reviews.
 - c. CSMC to receive a further briefing on 9 September 2013 examining our performance against the framework and involving a representative from another authority classed as "Excellent" under the framework, with a view to identifying some specific key outcomes for this Committee to address in improving the Council's position.

REASON: To progress the work of the Committee in line with scrutiny procedures and protocol.

5. INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Head of Strategy, Partnerships & Communication gave a presentation to the Committee on the Council's Consultation and Engagement process, a copy of the full presentation is attached to the online agenda. The presentation followed the Scrutiny Work Planning Event on 13 June 2013 to support a scrutiny topic proposed by a member of the public.

Members received details of the:

- Current consultation approach which included cross Council surveys, online consultation with support provided by Business Intelligence
- Role of the Consultation and Engagement Group in improving practices and co-ordination and development of a toolkit

- Council's aim to provide a better resource for residents, ensuring all could take part with feedback provided
- Development of a new approach through a strategic group using ideas from a recent scrutiny review
- Five key principles of consultation
- Proposed future actions

Members questioned the definition of consultation and the account taken of any results. It was confirmed that larger surveys were normally undertaken by the Office of the Chief Executive (OCE) with smaller departmental surveys carried out by individual departments. It was acknowledged that consultations generally within the Council could be improved.

Reference was also made to current Local Plan consultation and the need to ensure that all future venues were accessible to all residents. It was also questioned whether consultations would be better co-ordinated by one team however it was confirmed that, if more consultation was undertaken, there would be insufficient staff in the OCE to carry these out.

It was suggested that more use should be made of Focus Groups earlier in the decision making process and the need to capitalise on goodwill in the local communities.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and noted and that progress against the recommendations arising from the original scrutiny review on community engagement be monitored in due course at the scheduled time.

REASON: To keep the Committee informed of progress on the changes being made in the Council's consultation processes.

6. WORK PLAN 2013-14

Consideration was given to the Committees work plan for the 2013/14 municipal year together with the following two topics proposed at the work planning event, held earlier in the month:

- Evidence based decision making
- Success Matrix

Further suggestions were also put forward of topics with themes which cut across all scrutiny committees:

- To develop protocols/policies around encouraging the Night Time Economy and the
- Impacts of Mental Health – to cut across all the Council's priorities

Officers suggested that the findings of the Peer Group assessment should also be incorporated into the Committee's work plan.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the 2013/14 work plan be received and noted subject to the addition of the work agreed earlier in the meeting together with the following additions:

15 July 2013

Briefing report on theme of Night Time Economy.

9 September 2013

- Overview report on feedback from Peer Group Review.
- Further briefing on the Council's journey to "Excellent" in Equalities.

REASON: To provide an overview of the Committee's work for the 2012/13 municipal year.

Councillor S Wiseman, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].

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