

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22nd July 2014

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING EVENT – REPORT TO COMMITTEE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The attached report details the feedback received from Members who participated in the reconvened Overview and Scrutiny training session on 2nd July 2014. During the course of this event a significant number of topics were proposed as being suitable for further scrutiny.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether any of the topics suggested should be pursued this year.. As part of this process Members are asked to consider the evidence basis for each of the proposed topics as well as the resource implications.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) which topics would be suitable to review as Task Group exercises;**
- 2) which topics would be suitable for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider during the year;**
- 3) which of the proposed topics require no further action or could be dealt with in another way; and**
- 4) that the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny training was delivered to 11 Members on 10th June. During this training Members were provided with an overview of the powers of scrutiny and received information about the current strategic considerations for Council services. Members had also been due to participate in a number of interactive sessions. However, due to the fact another key meeting was taking place in the local community that evening these exercises were postponed until later in the year.

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- 3.2 The training was subsequently scheduled to take place on 2nd July and all non-executive Members were invited to participate. In the event six councillors attended this session.
- 3.3 As part of the training Members participated in two exercises. For the first exercise Members highlighted the five key issues that had been brought to their attention in the previous six months (or, in the case of new Members, whilst canvassing). These issues were then linked to the Council's strategic purposes. The aim of the exercise was to enable Members to reflect on the main topics that were of interest to the local community and to ensure that these were brought to the attention of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 3.4 In the second exercise the Councillors worked in two groups. The groups discussed each of the topics that had been recorded in the first exercise and attempted to determine the following:
- Whether the topic was suitable for further scrutiny.
 - What issues would need to be addressed as part of a review of this subject.
 - Whether the review would be suitable for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or by a Task Group.
- 3.5 A record was provided of both group's conclusions which is detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 3.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes collective decisions about which topics should be subject to further scrutiny and there is the possibility that the Committee will disagree with the conclusions reached by Members during the training event. Any items that Members feel would be suitable for the Committee to scrutinise at a single meeting will be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. However, Members are asked to note that at Redditch Borough Council there is a constitutional requirement for a scoping document, detailing the terms of reference for a review, to be completed for any Task Group exercises. Whilst topics potentially suitable for Task Group exercises may be identified from the list of subjects detailed in Appendix 1, no final decision will be made about any Task Group until a scoping document has been submitted for the consideration of the Committee.
- 3.7 Members are also asked to note that three scoping documents are due to be considered during this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Only two of these reviews could be launched immediately. If two Task Groups are approved during this meeting of the Committee Members would need to postpone any additional scrutiny exercises until later in the year.

Financial Implications

- 3.8 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, in line with constitutional requirements any Overview and Scrutiny reports

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completed during the year, including Task Group reports, will need to address the financial implications of recommendations made to the Executive Committee or other bodies.

Legal Implications

- 3.9 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, in line with constitutional requirements any Overview and Scrutiny reports completed during the year, including Task Group reports, will need to address the legal implications of recommendations made to the Executive Committee or other bodies.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 Members have previously agreed that this year only two Task Group exercises will take place at any one time in line with Officer capacity. Where necessary, this could be accompanied by a Short, Sharp Review.
- 3.11 At present the Football Task Group is the only review that remains following completion of all the other scrutiny exercises launched in 2013/14. This exercise has not been supported by the lead Democratic Services Officer with responsibility for supporting scrutiny exercises at the Council because it was launched at a time of a heavy workload for scrutiny. There is no intention for this Officer to become involved in this exercise to ensure that the review retains consistent Officer support. For this reason there is currently capacity for the Officer to support two Task Group exercises as detailed in paragraph 3.9 above.
- 3.12 Consideration should also be given to the Committee's Work Programme when deciding appropriate dates to receive reports or presentations on topics that the Committee feels would be suitable for further scrutiny.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 The Committee should note that focusing on issues of importance to the local community, in line with customers' priorities, is considered to be best practice. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is therefore asked to consider the extent to which each of the proposed topics reflects the needs and priorities of local residents when deciding whether to look at these items.
- 3.14 A number of the subjects identified by Members during the event do not relate to services delivered by Redditch Borough Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is entitled to scrutinise any issues that may impact on the local community, including services provided by external partner organisations. Members should not therefore feel constrained to focus on Council services alone.

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- 3.15 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications to this report. However, in line with best practice Members may want to consider the potential impact of a review on particular groups within society when deciding whether or not a subject would be suitable for further scrutiny.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Suggested topics for scrutiny

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