

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 4th July, 2019

MINUTES

APPENDIX 2

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Andrew Fry, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mark Shurmer and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Jayne Baylis, Sue Hanley, Guy Revans and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and F Mughal

19. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND NEW GOVERNANCE GUIDANCE - PRESENTATION

Members were reminded that at the previous meeting of the Committee on 6th June, 2019 the Committee had considered the Overview and Scrutiny Statutory Guidance that had been published by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government in May 2019. As requested during that meeting a report had been produced which highlighted the areas in the guidance that diverged from local scrutiny practice. Members were invited to consider whether to make any amendments to local practice based on the content of the report.

During consideration of the report the following points were highlighted:

- The guidance stressed the need for early and regular engagement between the Executive and Scrutiny. Although the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed scrutiny matters with the Leader of the Council when necessary, the Committee suggested that this arrangement should be formalised as it was at other Councils. To ensure that these meetings were useful Members proposed that the Leader of the Council should meet with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the

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leader of the opposition to discuss scrutiny matters. In line with practice at other Councils Members suggested that these meetings should take place on a quarterly basis, though additional meetings could be arranged if required.

- Communicating Scrutiny's Role and Purpose to the Wider Authority and Communicating Scrutiny's Role to the Public was another section of the guidance that was discussed. Members noted that the local press were not always able to attend scrutiny meetings, though could help to disseminate information about scrutiny activities to the public. The Committee agreed that the Council's Communications Team should be invited to attend a future meeting to help discuss action that could be taken to help raise awareness of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the public.
- Conflicts of interest, including familial links was a future point in the guidance that was considered by the Committee. Members noted that it was important to avoid any perception that a Member's approach to scrutiny was shaped by their familial links to a Member of the Executive committee. However, Members also agreed that in a small authority such as Redditch Borough Council there was always the possibility that scrutiny Members would have family links members of the Executive Committee. It was agreed that where Members were scrutinising the work of a particular Portfolio Holder any scrutiny Members related to that Portfolio Holder should declare an interest.

RECOMMENDED to the Constitutional Review Working Party that

the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should meet on a quarterly basis with the Leader of the Council and the leader of the opposition to discuss scrutiny matters.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.07 pm