

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22nd May 2012

Overview And Scrutiny Training - Feedback

Relevant Portfolio Holder	To be confirmed at the time of writing
Portfolio Holder Consulted	N/A
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report details the outcomes of training that was provided to all Members on the subject of Overview and Scrutiny on Monday 14th May 2012. In particular, the committee is asked to consider the subjects that were proposed by Members during the training as potential items for scrutiny and whether to incorporate these items into the Committee's Work Programme for 2012/13.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE**

- 1) whether any of the potential scrutiny topics proposed during Overview and Scrutiny training on 14th May (Appendix 1) should be considered further as potential items for scrutiny; and**
- 2) that the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny is a key element of democratic governance arrangements at Redditch Borough Council. To ensure that members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee can deliver the scrutiny process effectively training is provided annually on the subject of Overview and Scrutiny to elected Members.
- 3.2 This year Overview and Scrutiny training was provided to elected Members on Monday 14th May. The training session provided Members with an introduction to scrutiny, an outline of the Overview and Scrutiny structure in Redditch, and useful information about effective policy review (Task and Finish Group) work. The training was also designed to be interactive and provided elected Members with an opportunity to propose subjects that might potentially be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group during 2012/13 (Appendix 1).

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- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee determines the scrutiny Work Programme. Any elected Member, Council Officer, or member of the public can propose an item scrutiny at any time in the year. The Committee is not obliged to launch any reviews that are suggested. However, Members should consider all proposals that are received by the Committee and should provide reasons for any conclusions about proposed reviews.
- 3.4 A number of the topics proposed during the training session would have the potential to form the basis of a Task and Finish review or a Short, Sharp review. In addition, Members may conclude that some of the subjects might be suitable for the Committee to consider at a single meeting.
- 3.5 A scoping document will need to be produced for any items that the Committee considers to be an appropriate subject for a Task and Finish or Short, Sharp Review (Appendix 2). Scoping documents are designed to provide the individual proposing a review with an opportunity to outline the reasons why a review should be launched and the potential terms of reference for a review. The Member who initially proposed a subject would be approached to complete this scoping document though support could be provided by Officers.

Financial Implications

- 3.6 There are no direct financial implications to this report. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Groups are obliged to investigate and acknowledge the financial implications of any proposed actions identified during a scrutiny exercise.

Legal Implications

- 3.7 There are no direct legal implications to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can launch a review of any issue that is impacting on or of interest to the local community. To ensure that reviews are timely and address current community needs the Committee might want to consider how a review of a subject would contribute to the Council's priorities when determining whether a proposed subject would be suitable for scrutiny. Currently, Redditch Borough Council's priorities are that Redditch should be: an enterprising community; clean and green; safe; and underpinning these priorities the Council should aim to be a well managed organisation.
- 3.9 The Committee might also wish to consider the key priorities of the Redditch Local Strategic Partnership, which Redditch Borough Council is committed to addressing. These priorities are: health inequalities; education attainment and

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raising the aspirations of young people; developing the economy of Redditch; and tackling areas of deprivation.

- 3.10 In certain circumstances the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may conclude that a proposed subject would not be suitable for scrutiny. For example, topics that have recently been the subject of a review by undertaken by either Councillors or Officers might not be considered appropriate for scrutiny due to the potential to duplicate recent work. Members might also decide not to undertake a review if the proposed review is unlikely to result in constructive outcomes or if the terms of reference that are being proposed are considered to be unrealistic. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should refrain from reviewing any planning applications or licensing applications as these are subject to separate quasi-judicial processes.
- 3.11 Members may also need to consider available resources when selecting items for scrutiny. This should include considering the availability of elected Members to participate in a review, which usually comprises a maximum of five Councillors. Existing review work should also be considered when determining whether to launch a review. At present, Overview and Scrutiny Members are in the process of completing a review of access for people with disabilities to Redditch town centre and the Committee is committed to launching a review of Redditch market.
- 3.12 In recent years the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recognised the need to undertake a mixture of lengthy Task and Finish reviews and briefer Short, Sharp reviews at any one time. By undertaking a mixture of review work Members are more likely to be able to balance working demands and to report review outcomes to the Executive Committee at different stages during the year.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 One of the key principles of Overview and Scrutiny is to enable the voice and concerns of residents and local communities. Members should therefore consider to what extent each suggested item for scrutiny would meet the needs of local people. Consideration should also be given to the most appropriate forms of consultation that might be required during a review to enable interested stakeholders to contribute to an exercise.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no implications for risk management.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Suggested Items for Scrutiny
Appendix 2: Scrutiny Scoping Document

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COMMITTEE**

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