

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 5th June, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Driver in the Chair

Councillors J Bale, B Cleasby, T Leadley
and R Pryke

1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Members and officers to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in the 2006/07 municipal year, and also paid tribute to the hard work of the outgoing Chair, Councillor Liz Minkin.

2 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Grahame and Lancaster.

4 Minutes - 26th April 2006

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2006 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- (a) Scrutiny Commission (Avoiding Alcohol Abuse) (Minute No 152 refers)
Further to Minute No 152, 26th April 2006, the Chair reported that the final responses to the Commission's Inquiry Report would now be submitted to the July OSC meeting.
- (b) Scrutiny Commission (Flooding within Leeds) (Minute No 153 refers)
Further to Minute No 153, 26th April 2006, the Commission Chair, Councillor Leadley, reported on a recent Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Spatial Strategy Review meeting he had attended at which it was clear that flooding problems was now regarded as an issue which needed to be tackled at regional level. However, referring to recent problems which had re-occurred locally on 16th May 2006, almost exactly a year after similar problems in May 2005, it was clear that much remained to be done locally to address the issues highlighted in his Commission's final report.

6 Outstanding Minutes of Former Scrutiny Boards

RESOLVED – That the final minutes of the following former Scrutiny Boards be received and noted:-

- Thriving Communities, 19th April 2006
- Environment and Community Safety, 24th April 2006
- Transforming Services, 27th April 2006.

7 The Scrutiny Process and Constitutional Changes

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report outlining for the Committee the changes to Scrutiny Board arrangements recently approved by Council and the revised Terms of Reference of OSC.

In brief summary, the following main issues were discussed:-

- The possibility, where absolutely necessary, of certain Inquiries being carried over from one municipal year to the next where this might be warranted, rather than attempt to impose false deadlines. It was accepted that this was feasible, but possible continuity difficulties were also highlighted;
- It was agreed that the Head of Scrutiny Support and Member Development should obtain and circulate to OSC Members a copy of the report of the London Assembly into the 7th July bombings, published today;
- Other items suggested for further consideration as part of the Committee's work programme were progress on the Council's 'Narrowing the Gap' corporate objective, and the relationship between the Call Centre and service departments in terms of following through on complaints received or matters highlighted.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

8 The Advisory Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development regarding the advisory aspects of OSC's role.

In addition to the proposals contained in the report relating to the co-ordination of Board work programmes and the development of best practice, which Members accepted and welcomed, the Board also felt that it was important for it to develop its relationship with the Executive Board and Executive Members. This should be a two-way exchange of ideas and views, perhaps via quarterly reports from OSC to the Executive Board, and this would also allow OSC to highlight to the Executive strategic areas, such as transport, where it was felt that issues needed to be addressed and discuss how best to tackle them.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

9 Annual Scrutiny Report to Council - Action Plan

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding the annual process whereby OSC, on behalf of all Scrutiny Boards, submitted an Annual Scrutiny Report and associated Action Plan to the Executive Board.

Developing Members' theme from the last item, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development suggested that perhaps the development of a Forum, involving Scrutiny Board Chairs and Executive Board Members, was one way in which links and communication could be improved. It would also help to establish a direct link in terms of progressing corporate priorities.

The Chair indicated that he supported this concept, perhaps with Forum meetings being themed to one particular subject, such as obesity, transport, the environment, quality and care, employment and training etc.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted, and the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development further develop the ideas discussed and report back to the Committee.

10 OSC Work Programme - Sources of Work and Establishing Priorities

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development regarding developing the Committee's work programme for 2006/07.

The Chair stated that the report was an excellent starting point for planning OSC's work programme, and that he was in favour, where appropriate, of single item agendas.

In brief summary, the following matters were discussed as part of the Committee's consideration of this item:-

- Progress chasing on the Council's 'Narrowing the Gap' corporate objective;
- Obesity – to build upon the excellent work previously carried out by the Scrutiny Board (Health and Well Being);
- Electoral arrangements – carry over from work of Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities);
- Co-ordination of cross-cutting issues across Boards.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the Board's work programme as submitted be approved and accepted, and the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development be requested, in consultation with the Chair, to develop further the proposed work programme and report back.

11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Councillor Pryke submitted his apologies for the next scheduled meeting, on Monday 3rd July at 10.00 am (Pre-Meeting 9.30 am), and requested that consideration be given to the possibility of moving OSC meetings from a Monday, which were personally inconvenient for him.

The Chair stated his intention to hold Pre-Meetings at 9.30 am prior to each OSC meeting, which would itself commence at 10.00 am.

RESOLVED – That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, in consultation with the Chair, be requested to review the current proposed dates for OSC meetings.