

Responses to Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Report to Overview Committee

Title of the review: Effective Scrutiny

Date review completed: 19 March 2018

Date Presented to Cabinet: 3 May 2018

Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Clarke

Chair of the review group: Councillor M Paling

Officer supporting the review: Helen Lee

Response due to the Overview Committee (28 days): 23 June 2018

Guidance

The final report and recommendations from the above review have been considered by Cabinet and a written response to the recommendations from the responsible Cabinet Member to the Overview Committee is required within twenty eight days of the date the review was presented to Cabinet.

If you need any further assistance in completing this response please contact the Officer that supported the review

Recommendation 1

That information about the roles and responsibilities of becoming a Councillor should be available for prospective Councillors.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly accepted Do not accept

It is accepted that information about the roles and responsibilities of becoming a councillor have previously only been handed out to newly elected councillors. The current versions are currently being reviewed and re worded and officers do plan to issue them to prospective candidates as soon as they become nominated.

However, it is also important to note that political parties have a responsibility to brief their candidates about the realities of life as a councillor as part of the selection

process.

Recommendation 2

That comprehensive training is available for all Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members, in particular, new members, to ensure that they fully understand their role on the Committee and which will assist them when questioning representatives.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

There are plans to deliver training to Scrutiny Committee members after the elections in May 2019. All scrutiny members are also encouraged to be part of the East Midlands Scrutiny Network which is an excellent opportunity to gain ideas and insight from other councils about how to carry out effective scrutiny.

It is recommended that any training offered should be mandatory for Scrutiny Committee members.

Recommendation 3

A reduction in the number of members of the Committee should be reviewed.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

This recommendation is not supported. The Scrutiny Committee is an excellent way to facilitate the involvement of back-bench members in council business. If the number of members on the Committee is reduced, this would reduce the opportunity for members to participate in committee meetings .

Recommendation 4

Committee meetings are managed more effectively. Agendas should not include too many items with meetings kept to a maximum time of two hours.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The recommendation is supported in principle but the management of the meeting is a matter for the Chair of the Committee.

Recommendation 5

That a streamlined/simplified way to monitor performance is developed.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly and year end performance reports which mirror the information provided to Cabinet to monitor performance. The reports include a general overview of the status of agreed actions and indicators, details of particularly good performance, areas of concern and achievements.

Members of the Committee are given access to detailed performance reports and individual portfolio holder performance reports are provided to aid questioning when portfolio holders attend meetings to be “held to account”. This enables more detailed questioning of poor performance or areas of concern to take place.

It is therefore considered that the Committee has a comprehensive set of data available to it to monitor performance. Scrutiny Committee will need to identify any additional performance information it requires.

Recommendation 6

That a template for the selection of topics for review is introduced.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

This is a good idea as it will lead to more focussed topics for scrutiny.

The Democratic Services officer will work with the Chair of the Committee to create such a template.

Recommendation 7

That the role and responsibilities of becoming working group chair are defined.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

This is a good idea as it will ensure clarity in the role.

The Democratic Services officer will work with the Chair of the Committee to prepare such a document.

Recommendation 8

Mechanisms to increase the level of engagement and participation with the Youth and Elders Council and the wider public are improved.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The recommendation is supported in principle and the Committee encouraged to identify how it wishes to increase engagement and participation.

Recommendation 9

A guide to scrutiny which explains the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for members of the public should be developed; this should also include a form which could enable topic suggestions for examination to be put forward. This will require creating a web page dedicated to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The recommendation is supported in principle and the committee encouraged to work with the Democratic Services officer to develop an appropriate guide.

Recommendation 10

Revision of the current reporting mechanisms for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be considered.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The primary role of the Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account and ensure that decision making is transparent, efficient and accountable. When the Committee considers functions which are the responsibility of the Executive, reports and recommendations need to be made to Cabinet as full Council does not have the jurisdiction to accept or reject those recommendations.

There is however a requirement for the Committee to report annually to full Council on its work and future work programmes. It is accepted that this could be reviewed to ensure that the profile of the Committee and its work is increased.