

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 29 April 2014

Councillor Mike Hope (Chair)

Councillor Gary Gregory	Councillor Stephen Poole
Councillor Patricia Andrews	Councillor Colin Powell
Councillor Emily Bailey	Councillor Suzanne Prew-Smith
Councillor Sandra Barnes	Councillor John Truscott
Councillor Paul Hughes	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Krista Blair and Councillor Henry Wheeler

Officers in Attendance: J Ansell, S Bray and J Robinson

Guests in Attendance None

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blair and Wheeler.

38 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None

39 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE- FINDING AND FOLLOW-UP

The Chair welcomed John Robinson, Chief Executive, who presented the key findings of the recent Peer Challenge and received questions from Members.

Key outcomes were highlighted as follows:

Strengths

The Council has an outward focus and is successfully engaged in 'Leadership of Place'. The Council is involved in many new activities and partnerships and is leading the Gedling Community.

It was recognised that the Council has a planned and phased approach in the use of its financial balances and deploys them for development.

Challenges

The swift co location arrangements with other partners had impacted on Council staff and created some uncertainty.

The ambitions of the Leadership and pace of change had raised the question – does the Leadership engage wider Members enough?

It had been identified that there could be potential for greater Member challenge of performance.

The Leader's forum might consider developing a 'Strategy of Place' to enhance partnership delivery.

Consideration to be given to the role and work of Scrutiny, which could be more involved in the development of the Budget and Council Plan.

The Council could acquire further assets to strengthen its' position and should invest in the skills of the organisation.

The Council should prioritise its' aims and ambitions in order to mitigate potential strain on the organisation.

Comments from Members

The Council should be aware of the individual skills and experience of Members in order to deploy them to better effect in policy and service development.

There is scope for greater Member involvement in corporate planning and policy development.

Members recognised that they had been much better informed in recent years on the setting of the budget, but not in how it was developed.

The move from a Committee to a Cabinet system of governance had presented a challenge as to how non - executive Members can be involved in discussions and development.

The drive to involve Members needs to come from the Council Leadership.

'Leadership of Place' – it was observed that in creating a joint working strategy the challenges would be to address duplication of initiatives and differentials in pay, terms and conditions of employment.

Alongside the regular Member briefing sessions, consideration should be given to the involvement of wider Members, either formally or informally, in contributing to the setting of Council priorities.

The whole Council could be more challenging of performance, and Members could be more proactive in taking up and attending briefings

and cross party working groups. Wider Members should also propose subjects for briefings, along with officers and the Council Leadership.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the presentation.

It was RESOLVED to note the outcomes of the Peer Challenge and to further consider the implications, both for Scrutiny and wider Member involvement in the performance and development of the Council.

40 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None

The meeting finished at 6.40pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: