

To: Council

Date: 3rd. February 2014

Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Title of Report: Scrutiny Briefing

Purpose of report: To update Council on the activities of scrutiny and other non executive councillors since the Committee was appointed in May.

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee has not met since the last meeting of Council so there has been no change in the standard performance data that I normally attach. I will update this for the Council meeting in April but if members have any questions in the meantime please contact Pat Jones using the details at the bottom of this report.
2. As elections approach I would like to remind members that if constituents raise issues of significance, one avenue for the review of these is by elected members through the scrutiny process. Scrutiny councillors are, and I'm sure will be, keen to focus on issues of importance to residents so I would encourage you to make suggestions when officers consult on the new programme in the next few months.

Current Activity

3. The recent flooding event caused misery for residents, significantly restricted access to our City Centre and affected businesses ability to trade and function. This has given impetus to the scrutiny panel work on flooding which is looking particularly at strategic issues around the performance of the Thames Water infrastructure. The Lead Member hopes to facilitate a meeting shortly between interested parties and Thames Water to explore shared priorities for investment and improvement. This Panel hopes that this will support the Council's focus on ensuring action in this area.

4. In December the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget was publicised for consultation. During January the Finance Scrutiny Panel has reviewed the proposals in meetings with Directors and Heads of Service and is now completing its report for presentation to the City Executive Board on the 12th. February and then on to Council.
5. The Review considering the “empowerment” of a number of minority groups mentioned in my last report to Council has reported and the Scrutiny Committee has asked for some further work from officers considering if and how some of its recommendations can be implemented. Once this has been completed a further report will be made to the Scrutiny Committee. If any members are interested in the outcomes so far the report can be found on the web site or details can be provided by Pat Jones, contact details at the bottom of this report.
6. The Review Panel considering the Covered Market and its future will report to the Scrutiny Committee on the 4th. February and recommendations will be presented to the City Executive Board on the 12th. February to accompany the response to the Retail Group’s report.

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