

To: Council

Date: 14th. July 2014.

Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Title of Report: Scrutiny Briefing

Purpose of report: To update Council on the activities of scrutiny function.

Introduction

I would like to thank the members of Scrutiny for selecting me to Chair this important Committee and congratulate Cllr Hayes on his appointment as Vice Chair. Our work has already started and our detailed report to Council follows. However, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight several points:

Workload - our terms of reference dictate 10 meetings per year. With this constraint, and the need to keep meetings to a reasonable length, we are already having to limit the items from the Forward Plan that we scrutinise and/or limit the extent of our deliberations. This also limits the time available to consider the output from Working Groups and Panels which I believe have already demonstrated their value.

Councillor engagement in scrutiny – I would encourage Councillors from all political groups to present issues for scrutiny. Scrutiny is not just a process for opposition Councillors but one all members should be using.

Items falling between the gaps – the delayed elections this year coupled with the timing of Scrutiny and CEB meant that there was insufficient time to scrutinise all of the items going to CEB on 3rd July that Members wanted to consider. Only those identified by the previous Scrutiny Committee (with a different membership) were available at our June meeting for consideration.

Links to the LGA Challenge process – I write this before the LGA Challenge process has commenced. It would, however, seem natural to take

any conclusions from this process and feed it in to Scrutiny. I would therefore encourage the Administration to make available the recommendations.

My detailed report follows:

Standard Information

1. I will always include the following information:
 - Current Panel work showing membership and progress.
 - Forward agendas – these will be indicative only.
 - Recommendations made and the outcome from these.
 - The number and result of any called in decisions or councillor calls for action.
2. This information is now included at Appendix 1 to this briefing but at the time of writing is in **DRAFT** awaiting the confirmation of the Committee.
3. The Council has appointed a new Scrutiny Officer to replace Pat Jones. His name is Andrew Brown and will start work with us on the 21st. July.

Current Activity

4. At the time of writing the Scrutiny Committee has only met once. At this meeting we pre-scrutinised a number of issues for decision at the City Executive Board in July and also considered the performance of Fusion Lifestyle over the previous year.
5. These debates resulted in a number of recommendations to the City Executive Board which can be seen in the Appendix to this report. In particular for our Leisure Services the Committee continues it's focus on the engagement in leisure activities by residents from our most deprived wards. It is in these areas were the most impact on health and well-being is needed.
6. The delayed election date meant that the Committee was not able to agree its full work programme but did agree to roll forward a number of issues from the previous year. The 2 major pieces of work that are currently underway are:
 - The Oxford Standard Panel – Joint review with Scrutiny Tenants
 - Thames Water Utilities investment in the sewerage system in Oxford.
7. Two Standing Panels have been set, Finance and Housing, and the Chairs of these are myself and Councillor Smith. A tenant has once again been invited to sit with councillors on the Housing Panel.

8. I would like to remind all members of Council that if there is an issue they wish to see scrutinised then they are able to either ask a Scrutiny Councillor to place this on the agenda of the Scrutiny Committee or with 3 supporter add this to the agenda themselves.
9. The operating arrangements have been confirmed as the same as the previous year the detail can be obtained from Pat Jones. I would like to highlight some of the these:
 - The Scrutiny Committee will act as a Commissioning Committee but will also conduct its “holding to account” role at the scheduled formal meetings.
 - Formal meetings have been agreed to link into the City Executive Board cycle allowing any report to be pre-scrutinised.
 - The administrative management of the programme will be undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair but the Scrutiny Committee will take overall control of the work programme.
 - All Scrutiny Members will be encouraged to take a lead on particular topics or issues and provide advice and a link back to the Committee.
 - Scrutiny Councillors and the Scrutiny Officer will actively engage other non executive councillors in the work programme and as many opportunities as possible will be provided for those who wish to be involved to do so.
 - Opportunities will be sort to engage as many residents and “experts” in the work of the Committee in an effort to broaden opinion and improve conclusions.
10. By the time Council meets again in September Scrutiny will have considered the suggestions made by members for inclusion in the work programme. I will report further on this then.

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Appendix 1

Committee Agenda Schedules

Each agenda will have 2 standing items:

- Work programme and recommendation progress
- Forward Plan

Date	Agenda Item
23 rd . June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fusion Lifestyle contract performance 13/14 2. Community Engagement Policy Statement (pre-scrutiny) 3. End of Year Integrated Report (pre-scrutiny)
2 nd . September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business in the Community, Working in Partnership (pre-scrutiny) 2. Oxfordshire Growth Board (pre-scrutiny) 3. Towards Mental Wellbeing and Community Resilience in Oxford (pre-scrutiny) 4. Discretionary Housing Payments, scheme review (pre-scrutiny)? 5. Additional information – Leisure contract performance? 6. Performance Measure sets 7. Educational attainment investment – Key stage 1 results
7 th . October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discretionary Housing Payments – awards and spending 2. Achievement of Consultation Ambition – evidence? 3. Oxford Standard Panel Report 4. TWU Panel Report 5. Educational attainment investment – Key stage 2 results 6. Research into the local impact of Welfare Reform (may be available earlier)
11 th . November	

9 th . December	
20 th . January	1. Discretionary Housing Payments – awards and spending
3 rd . February	
4 th . February	
3 rd . March	
24 th . March	1. Discretionary Housing Payments – awards and spending

Finance Standing Panel Agenda Schedules

Date	Agenda Item
4 th . September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treasury Management Annual Report (pre-scrutiny) 2. Ethical Investment 3. Capital programme process review
8 th . October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr 2 spending 2. Qtr 2 Treasury Management Performance
21 st . January	
5 th . February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr 3 spending 2. Qtr. 3 Treasury Management Performance 3. Treasury Management Strategy 15/16

Housing Standing Panel Agenda Schedules

Date	Agenda Item
3 rd . September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaseholder Payment Options for Major Works (pre-scrutiny) 2. STAR survey results
9 th . October	
22 nd . January	
4 th . February	

Scrutiny Recommendation 2014 – 2015

All recommendations

Community Engagement Policy Statement Scrutiny Committee 25th. June.		
Recommendation	Outcome	Considered by
To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
End of Year Integrated Report – 2013-2014 Scrutiny Committee 23rd. June 2014		

Recommendation	Outcome	Considered by
The Committee supports the purchase of the Iffley Road building as an asset of value to the community and recognises that negotiations are on-going. There is a gap between the asking price and the money available and the City Executive Board is asked to do what it can within reasonable value for money criteria to secure the purchase of this property.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
To consider the contingency available to support homelessness in light of county proposals for implementing cuts in the Supporting People and if underspends from 13/14 should be maintained within this budget.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 3 rd . July
<p>Fusion Lifestyle performance 2013- 2014</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee 23rd. June 2014</p>		
Recommendation	Outcome	Considered by
<p>Facility running costs</p> <p>It was agreed at the June meeting in 2013 that the running costs of the facilities would be shown including all capital investment and loan cost in the next report. This hadn't been done.</p> <p>Performance outside of expectations</p>	Awaiting	Board Member 26 th . June.

Members asked how poor performance was addressed and you outline your regular client meetings where issues of this nature are addressed. Members asked to see the issues raised and the actions/penalties taken over the last year.

Publicity Campaign

An issue was raised concerning literature used to highlight the Active Women Campaign. The images used were considered to be too stereotypical and gender biased. You outlined that this was a national campaign run by Sports England and so the influence you could have was probably limited. The Committee asked that you take the issue to Sports England and report back on the outcome.

Views of non-card users at facilities

The Committee asked to see any information you have on the views and experiences of non-card users

Falling attendance amongst young people

The Committee were concerned to see this and wanted some more detailed data and information to understand more fully the reasons behind it and whether it was a particular set of circumstances or a trend.

Information excluded from the public

The Committee heard a complaint from a member of the public

<p>that the information provided outlining the running costs to the Council of each Leisure Facility should be made public because if the Council was still running these centres then the information would be available publically. You outlined that this was commercial information. The Committee asked that you reconsider this exclusion with Fusion and let them know the outcome.</p>		
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Current Panels

Details can be obtained from Pat Jones phjones@oxford.gov.uk or any of the Lead Members.

Panel	Comment
<p>Thames Water investment to improve flooding and sewerage issues in the City.</p> <p>Issue carried forward from 13/14 Work Programme.</p> <p>To continue engagement with TWU at a senior level to ensure delivery of the agreements reached.</p> <p>Lead: Councillor Darke</p> <p>Councillors Pressel, Thomas.</p> <p>Liberal Democrat Member to be notified</p>	<p>Panel members during May 14 met with TWU and obtained agreement to bring forward a whole area study of the condition of the sewerage system in Oxford.</p> <p>The governance of this process and subsequent investment would be monitored and challenged via an Expert Group and a Steering Group including Members from the Scrutiny Panel and City Council Officers.</p>
<p>Oxford Standard Panel</p> <p>To give advice to the City Executive Board on the content and definition of the Oxford Standard for all Council properties.</p> <p>Based on available data to outline the timeframe within which it would be reasonable to deliver this standard.</p> <p>Housing Standing Panel members plus the Tenant Scrutiny Group</p> <p>Joint Chairing</p>	<p>Data from the stock condition survey considered by the Group.</p> <p>Broader tenant consultation underway.</p> <p>July meeting to consider outcomes of consultation.</p>

Called in Decisions and Councillor Calls for Action

None.

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