

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 11th June, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

Councillors D Blood, I Cooper, C Elcock, A Finch, C Hale, M Hanif, L Jones, M Mottram, K Turner, D Tyler and M Wood

Observer:

Councillor C Baugh

Officers:

R Sims, Assistant Director (Housing Strategy and Private Sector - Lead Officer to the Board) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager - Directorate of Corporate Resources)

1 Election of Chair

Councillor D Tyler was elected as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for the 2014/15 municipal year.

2 Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor A Finch was elected as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for the 2014/15 municipal year.

3 Apology for Absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R James.

4 Appointment of Substitute Member

It was reported that Councillor M Wood had been appointed as a substitute for Councillor R James for this meeting of the Board.

5 **Declaration of Interests**

Councillor D Tyler declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 7 (Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15) in relation to the proposed scrutiny of the work and priorities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner as a Member of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel.

6 **Minutes**

Note: The Chair asked that a suitable letter be sent to former Councillor Sue Ridney to place on record the appreciation of her past service and her significant contribution to developing health and other scrutiny-related work within Dudley MBC.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th April, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

7 **Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15**

Further to Minute No. 27 of the meeting held on 29th April, 2014, the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources reported on the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15.

The Board had previously considered the development of the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme. Consideration had been given to items rolled-forward from 2013/14 and a number of suggested topic areas for inclusion in the programme for the forthcoming municipal year. The draft plan had been developed following consultation with Directorates and Members. Topics had been identified taking account of key corporate challenges and priorities in the business planning process.

The Board was requested to endorse the items set out below for inclusion in the 2014/15 Annual Scrutiny Plan. This included an additional item identified during the consultation process concerning corporate services provided by the Council that were shared between Directorates.

Scrutiny Committee

Corporate Performance
Management, Effectiveness and
Efficiency Scrutiny Committee

Areas for Scrutiny

- The Work and Priorities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
- Corporate use of shared services

Adult, Community and Housing Services Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Futures Board • Dudley MBC's readiness to implement the Care Bill in April 2015
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood Neglect • Early Help Offer • Special Educational Needs Reforms
Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development (including inward investment) • Environmental Management, Commercial Services
Health Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of Patient Experience in Acute Care

The Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee undertook the ongoing function to review the quarterly performance management report. The Health Scrutiny Committee also dealt with a wide range of other issues, including statutory health scrutiny items. In the draft programme reported to the Board on 29th April, there had been an item relating to the Dudley Physical Activity and Sport Strategy. In view of the workload of the Health Scrutiny Committee, a view was taken that this item should not form part of the initial Annual Scrutiny Plan, however, this might be reviewed at a future point.

Requests for the referral of any further specific topics for scrutiny would be channelled through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Board would decide whether to undertake the scrutiny review itself or refer the matter to a specific Scrutiny Committee.

Details of the scrutiny topics would be reported to the June/July cycle of Scrutiny Committees with a view to briefing Members of each Scrutiny Committee on the workload allocated to them as well as providing further background information on the topics being considered during the year.

In 2014/15, Scrutiny Committees would also focus on the detailed scrutiny of individual Directorate budget proposals whilst retaining some flexibility for cross-cutting issues. Following the programmed cycle of Scrutiny Committees in November, 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would meet to scrutinise the overall budget proposals on a strategic basis. A meeting of the Board had been scheduled for this purpose on 25th November, 2014.

During the autumn of 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would also consider key strategic items concerning the Better Care Fund and Corporate Restructuring. The details relating to agenda items and the start time of meetings would be subject to further discussion between the Lead Officer and the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements would continue to be the subject of an annual review process. Any relevant issues would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board during the municipal year.

Resolved:

That the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15, including the items referred to above, be approved and adopted.

8 **Membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Further to Minute No. 28 of the meeting held on 29th April, 2014, the Board considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources on a review of the composition and membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had previously indicated its wish to review the composition and membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that the Committee remained fit for purpose and to enable it to move forward with a wider focus than just educational issues. The Board had particular regard to the number of non-elected Members who served on the Committee and the need to reflect the developing social care agenda taking account of the items in the Annual Scrutiny Programme.

The report contained a summary of the existing legal provisions concerning the appointment of co-opted members and details of the historical arrangements adopted by the Council.

The Board agreed that the existing co-opted membership was no longer appropriate for all meetings given the wider remit of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. Views were expressed on the size of the Committee and the need to avoid a single focus on educational issues.

The Board recommended that the statutory co-opted members should be retained and that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee establish a pool of specialist/key contacts to be invited to attend to advise the Committee, or give evidence where appropriate, at specific meetings. This would provide for flexibility depending on the topics under discussion. It was envisaged that the pool of contacts could include a wide range of educational and social care professionals, faith groups, disability groups, trade unions and persons from other Boroughs with specific expertise.

Resolved:

That the Council be recommended to approve amendments to the co-opted membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, as outlined above, namely to retain the statutory co-opted members and that the Scrutiny Committee be requested to establish a pool of specialist/key contacts to be invited to advise the Committee, attend or give evidence at meetings, as appropriate, depending on the specific topics under discussion.

The meeting ended at 6.40 p.m.

CHAIR