

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Tuesday, 27th March, 2018 at 6.00 p.m.
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present

Councillor S Phipps (Vice-Chair in the Chair)
Councillors A Aston, C Elcock, J Hill, K Jordan, M Rogers, E Taylor and S Waltho

Officers

S Griffiths - Democratic Services Manager/Statutory Scrutiny Officer and
C Blunn – Programme Manager

45 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Body, D Perks, R Scott-Dow and S Tyler.

46 **Appointment of Substitute Member**

Councillor C Elcock had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor S Tyler for this meeting of the Board only.

47 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member declared an interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

48 **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

49 **Corporate Quarterly Performance Report**

The Board considered the third Corporate Quarterly Performance report for 2017/18. The report covered the period 1st October to 31st December, 2017.

During the presentation of the report, Members made comments, asked questions and responses were given where appropriate. Queries were raised on the following specific points:-

- With regard to Staff Sickness, Waste Recycling and Waste Composting, comments were made about the possibility of adjusting Performance Indicator targets throughout the year to recognise seasonal variations.
- In relation to Performance Indicator 426 (Timeliness of single assessments - % completed within 45 working days) further information was requested on the reason why the figure in Quarter 1 was 92.62 but then reduced significantly in Quarter 2.

Resolved

That the report be noted and that the specific points referred to above be raised with the relevant service areas.

50

Report of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee – Review of the Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees

A report of the Lead for Law and Governance and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer was submitted on the conclusions and recommendations of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee on a review of the effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees. The Government had published its response to the specific recommendations and these were summarised in the report.

The Board considered the individual recommendations of the CLG Committee, the Government responses and an assessment of the position in relation to the overview and scrutiny arrangements currently operated by the Council. The Board was invited to identify any key issues to be included in a future review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements.

The Board was generally of the opinion that the CLG Committee recommendations did not raise issues requiring significant changes to the Council's existing governance arrangements. The following points were raised during the discussion:-

- In relation to encouraging universities to play a role in local scrutiny, it was noted that provision already existed for Scrutiny Committees to engage external support and witnesses in appropriate circumstances.
- The purpose of the 'Public Forum' agenda item on Scrutiny Committees should be reviewed to ensure clarity for members of the public attending meetings.
- With regard to the scrutiny of the Mayoral Combined Authority, it was recommended that this be retained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19. The Council's representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be invited to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to provide feedback on the scrutiny work being undertaken on a regional basis.

- Members expressed general dissatisfaction concerning meetings of WMCA Committees being held in the daytime as this excluded many Councillors who were unable to attend due to personal and work commitments. The Board requested that representations be made to the Mayor of WMCA.
- Taking account of the issues in the report, and comments made by Members of the Board, it was considered that the effectiveness of the Council's overview and scrutiny governance arrangements should be included as an item in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19. This could involve initial consideration by a Working Group, with input from the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all Scrutiny Committees.
- Reference was made to the 'turnover' of Members on Scrutiny Committees and it was recommended that Group Leaders consider the benefits of maintaining continuity when making future appointments.

Resolved

- (1) That the conclusions and recommendations of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee be noted.
- (2) That the Government's response to the specific recommendations, as outlined in the report, be noted.
- (3) That the Mayoral West Midlands Combined Authority be retained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19, for inclusion in the work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- (4) That representations be made to the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority to express the dissatisfaction of the Board concerning meetings of WMCA Committees being held in the daytime.
- (5) That the effectiveness of the Council's overview and scrutiny governance arrangements be included as an item in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19.
- (6) That the Group Leaders be requested to consider the benefits of maintaining continuity when making future appointments to Scrutiny Committees.

51 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 2017/18

The Board considered a report of the Lead for Law and Governance and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2017/18.

The Board discussed the report and identified a number of provisional items to be considered for inclusion in the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19 as follows:

- Fly tipping – update on issues following consideration by the Board on 19th January, 2017
- Future proposals relating to Himley Hall
- Sporting provision with particular reference to the health and well-being aspects and other initiatives to tackle obesity and promote health (eg: safer routes to schools and activities relating to children and young people)
- Ongoing issues relating to West Midlands Combined Authority, Digital Transformation, Dudley Council Plus and customer services
- Annual review of the Constitution
- Council consultations, including regular ongoing corporate activity (eg: the Big Question) and ad-hoc consultations (eg: Planning issues)
- Maintenance of green spaces and nature reserves

The Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19 would be finalised at the meeting of the Board in June, 2018.

Resolved

- (1) That the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2017/18 be referred to the Council meeting on 9th April 2018.
- (2) That the Lead for Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to make any necessary amendments to update the annual report prior to its submission to the Council.
- (3) That the provisional items, as outlined above, be considered for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2018/19.
- (4) That any additional suggestions for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme 2018/19 be sent to the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Lead Officer by e-mail as soon as possible.

52 **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Board considered a report of the Lead for Law and Governance on the Forward plan of Key Decisions for the four-month period commencing on 1st April, 2018.

Resolved

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

53 **Vote of Thanks**

The Vice-Chair recorded his thanks to all Members and Officers for their support and contributions to the work of the Board during the 2017/18 municipal year.

Thanks were also extended to Councillor D Perks for the able and courteous manner in which he had conducted the business of the Board during the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm

CHAIR